Scripture-Evidence CONSIDER'D,

In a VIEW of the

Controverſy betwixt the AUTHOR and Mr. *BARCLAY*'s Defenders,

VIZ.

Mr. *Beaven* and Dr. *Morgan*;

IN A

Fourth LETTER to a Friend.

To which are added, Two Tracts, *viz.*

I. Some ſhort Reflections on VIRTUE and HAPPINESS: Wherein is ſhewn, That Good and Evil are founded in the abſtract Nature and Reaſon of Things; That Selfiſhneſs and Benevolence are two diſtinct and independent Principles of Action; That Virtue is ſolely founded in Benevolence; and, That the preſerving and cheriſhing in our ſelves a benevolent Temper and Diſpoſition, is the moſt ſure Way to a Happy Life.

II. A few Things humbly offer'd to the Conſideration of Believers and Unbelievers, in theſe happy Days of Liberty of Inquiry.

By THO. CHUBB.

LONDON:

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Scripture-Evidence

CONSIDER'D,

In a VIEW of the

Controverfy between the AUTHOR and
Mr. PARCELL's Defenders.

IN A

Letter to Mr. Brown and Dr. Morgan;

IN A

Fourth LETTER to a Friend.

BRITISH MUSEUM

BY THOMAS CHUBB.

LONDON:

Scripture Evidence CONSIDER'D.

SIR,

IN my *firſt* Letter I gave you my Opinion of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, with reſpect to Man's natural Ability ſince the Fall; and ſhewed you that his Scheme is *Confuſion*, and a *Contradiction* to it ſelf. This has alarmed the *Quakers*, or ſome of them at leaſt; and tho they cannot defend thoſe Principles, yet they ſeem unwilling they ſhould be given up. And,

THIS has given Occaſion to Mr. *Beaven* to appear in Mr. *Barclay*'s *Defence*, in a Tract entitled, *Supernatural Influences neceſſary to Salvation, &c.* What he has principally offer'd in favour of Mr. *Barclay* is, that I have *miſrepreſented him* in the *two Propoſitions*, by which I have expreſſed his Senſe of the Condition of Man in the Fall; and likewiſe that *my Principles* are very *injurious*; that Mr. *Barclay* was allow'd to be a *very great*

Man; that he has *declar'd otherwiſe* than what my *two Propoſitions* ſet forth, in other Parts of his Book; that I have *contradicted my ſelf*; that *Monro* and *Locke*, *Tully* and *Hierocles*, were of Mr. *Barclay's Opinion*; and that the *Scriptures* are on his ſide of the Queſtion. The *Groundleſſneſs* of ſome of theſe, and the *Weakneſs* of the reſt, I have fully ſhewn in my *Second* Letter.

WHICH Letter, together with the former, hath drawn forth another Advocate for Mr. *Barclay*, namely, Dr. *Morgan*, in a Tract, entitled, *A Letter to me*; which Letter is principally made up of Complaints, *viz.* that I recommended my two Letters to the Conſideration of the *Quakers only*; whereas if I had not been *partial*, if I had not made my ſelf a *Party Man*, *&c.* I ſhould have offer'd them to a Multitude of others; and likewiſe that I have very much *miſrepreſented Mr.* Barclay. The Groundleſſneſs of theſe Complaints I have ſhewn you in my *Third* Letter.

Dr. *MORGAN* has alſo appear'd a *ſecond* time, in a Tract entitled, *A farther Defence of Mr.* Barclay; in which Tract he gives a particular Account of the Condition of Man in the Fall, when conſider'd abſtractedly from *ſupervening Grace*. And this new Scheme he conſiders as Mr. *Barclay's*, and as the *Scripture* Account of the Matter, *viz.* That Man in the Fall, without ſupervening Grace, has *natural Liberty*, but is deſtitute of *moral Agency*. This Diſtinction he complains I have not made, and it is with him a Diſtinction of ſuch importance, that it helps him out upon all Occaſions; with reſpect to which I allow to the Doctor (if that will pleaſe him) that there may be natural Liberty in a Creature, where there is not moral Agency; but where moral Agency takes place (which is

the

the Caſe of Man) there natural Liberty and moral Agency is the ſame thing; and therefore I made no ſuch Diſtinction, becauſe in the Caſe before us there is no Place for it.

BY natural Liberty I underſtand the Doctor means, that Man in the Fall, without ſupervening Grace, has Power, and is at liberty, *to act* or *not to act*, from ſuch Motives as are preſent to his Mind; that he has Power, and is at liberty, either to *follow* or to *controul* his Appetites and Paſſions, and the like. This is the Idea which the words [natural Liberty] convey to me. But how ſuch Liberty will conſiſt with Man's being *abſolutely ſubjected* to the Power of his own Luſts, is what I cannot conceive. Abſolute Subjection in the preſent Caſe ſeems to ſuppoſe, that when *Paſſion* or *Appetite* interpoſe, Man is *neceſſarily* and *unavoidably* carry'd on to Action, independent of his own Will or Choice: But then this appears to me inconſiſtent with natural Liberty, and is Confuſion and Contradiction; tho poſſibly the Doctor, by the Help of ſome lucky Diſtinction, may get clear of it. Again,

IF Man has natural Liberty, as aforeſaid, then how he is *abſolutely ſubjected* to the Power of the Devil, is hard to conceive. Abſolute Subjection in this Caſe ſeems to ſuppoſe, that when the *Devil* exerciſes his Power in or upon a Man, Action from that Man will *unavoidably follow* according to the *Devil's* Intention; and that in ſuch a Caſe it is not in a Man's Power to refrain from acting, or to act otherwiſe: but then this is inconſiſtent with natural Liberty. And,

IF we conſider the Devil's Power to conſiſt only in *tempting Men* to the performance of this or that Action (which it has hitherto been judged to be) and if Man has natural Liberty, as a-

foreſaid, then it is a Matter of Choice or Election to every Man, either to *comply with*, or to *reject*, the Devil's Temptations. But then in this Caſe, Man is not abſolutely ſubjected to the Devil's Power; ſo that the whole is manifeſt Confuſion and Contradiction. Beſides,

IT has hitherto been judged, that the Work and Buſineſs of the Devil with Man has been to tempt and betray him into *Sin*; whereas Man in the Fall having only natural Liberty, and being deſtitute of moral Agency, he is *incapable* of *ſinning*, and conſequently of being *tempted* to *Sin*. And when we conſider the Caſe in this View, it will be hard to find what is the *Ground* of the Devil's Temptations, and what it is which makes him to intereſt himſelf in the Affairs of Mankind; tho, perhaps, this may be all clear'd up in the Doctor's next Performance.

IF it ſhould be urged, that I have uſed the Terms [abſolute Subjection] in a Senſe *too ſtrong* for what Dr. *Morgan* intended.

I ANSWER, if abſolute Subjection does not *force to Action*, but Men are at *liberty* to act or not to act, notwithſtanding ſuch Subjection; then I think the Caſe will ſtand thus, *viz.* that there are *Appetites* and *Paſſions* in Men; and that they have Power, and are at liberty either to *indulge* or *controul* them; that the *Devil tempts* Men; and that they have Power, and are at liberty either to *comply with*, or *reject* his Temptations. So that Men's being abſolutely ſubjected to the Power of the Devil and their own Luſts, amounts juſt to nothing at all.

IN the Doctor's firſt Tract, Men's being abſolutely ſubjected to the Power of the Devil and their own Luſts, ſeems to be conſidered and ranged among the terrible Effects of the Fall.

But

But in this View of the Caſe, it is no Effect of the Fall at all: It is the Condition of Man, whether *ſtanding* or *fallen*, whether with or without *ſupervening Grace*, except ſupervening Grace *irreſiſtibly* determines Men to Action; which, I preſume, the Doctor will not affirm, becauſe, I think, he has elſewhere declar'd the contrary.

APPETITES and Paſſions, and being tempted, and likewiſe a Power and Liberty to indulge or controul thoſe Appetites and Paſſions, and to comply with or reject Temptation, took place in our firſt Parents, *antecedent* to their Tranſgreſſion; and this was their Caſe after they had tranſgreſſed. And the Caſe muſt be always the ſame with Man, whilſt he is *conſtituted* and *circumſtanced* as he is, and whilſt *Agency* or *Liberty* take place in him: And therefore I cannot conceive to what end the Doctor introduced thoſe Terms, *viz.* Men's being abſolutely ſubjected to the Power of the Devil and their own Luſts, except it were to *amuſe* and *miſlead* his Reader.

THUS I have conſider'd the Caſe of Man in the Fall upon Doctor *Morgan*'s Scheme, with reſpect to what Man *has*, *viz. natural Liberty*. I now come to conſider his Caſe with reſpect to what *he has not*, viz. *moral Agency*.

BY the *want* of moral Agency in Man, I underſtand the Doctor to mean, that Man in the Fall, without ſupervening Grace, is *incapable* of diſcerning betwixt Good and Evil in a *moral Senſe*; that is, Man is incapable of diſcerning, that to ſuccour and relieve the Diſtreſſed, to feed the Hungry, clothe the Naked, and the like, are Actions which are *kind* and *good*, and therefore *proper* for him to perform. He is incapable of diſcerning, that to do as he would be done by, to make a

grateful Acknowledgment of a Benefit received to honour and reverence a Benefactor, and the like, are Actions which are *right* and *fit*, and therefore *worthy* of his Performance. He is incapable of diſcerning, that to ſlander and reviſe his Neighbour, to invade his Property, or to commit Adultery, Murder, and the like, are Actions which are *wrong* and *evil*, and therefore ought to be avoided. And,

AS this is the *Condition* of Man in the Fall, according to Dr. *Morgan*, ſo, according to him, Man is tranſlated out of this into another State, (*viz.* that of moral Agency) by *ſupervening Grace*; which Grace is extended *univerſally to all*, tho, according to his *firſt* Tract, the poor *Hottentots* are excepted, and, according to his *laſt* Performance, it is very *partially* adminiſtred; becauſe ſome Perſons for want of ſupervening Grace remain in *invincible Ignorance* with reſpect to ſome Points, and others the Effects of the Fall remain upon in *Part*. For tho they can reaſon juſtly in *ſome* Caſes, yet they are *mad* with reſpect to others; tho they can *govern* and *reſtrain* their Appetites and Paſſions in ſome Inſtances, yet thoſe Appetites and Paſſions are *invincible* in others, according as ſupervening Grace is afforded or withheld from them. And,

HEREBY I think the Doctor, whether he intends it or not, is giving a moſt fatal Wound to *Religion* and *Virtue*, and doing ſuch *Injury* to Mankind, as he may never be able to repair, by his pointing out to Men a way to *excuſe* and *juſtify* themſelves in the Practice of every *Vileneſs*. For will not every Man, who follows his vicious Inclinations, be glad to have this to plead *to* and *for himſelf*, *viz.* that in thoſe Inſtances, in which his Actions appear to be criminal, ſupervening

Grace

Grace was *withheld* from him, that his Appetite or his Paſſion interpoſed and *forced* him to Action; and that it was not in his Power to reſtrain it, and conſequently that he is wholly *unaccountable* in thoſe Inſtances? ſo that a Man may go into the *vileſt Actions*, and yet have wherewith to render his Mind perfectly *eaſy* and *quiet*, and be free from all *Reluctancy* in and after the Performance of them. And if this were the Caſe (which ſurely it is not) I cannot ſee how our *Governors* can be juſtified in *puniſhing* thoſe Perſons, who tranſgreſs the Law; becauſe in every ſuch Inſtance (for any thing they know) ſupervening Grace may have been *withheld*, invincible *Appetite* or *Paſſion* may have taken place, and it may not have been in the Perſon's Power to have done otherwiſe. And as the Doctor will have it, that he is pleading the Cauſe of *Chriſtianity*; ſo I think it will be proper for him to conſider *what Cauſe* he has been pleading here.

AND here I beg leave to obſerve, that by *invincible* Appetites and Paſſions, I underſtand the Doctor to mean *irreſtrainable* Appetites and Paſſions; otherwiſe I think thoſe Terms ſerve only to *amuſe*. And if irreſtrainable be intended, then natural Liberty is *loſt* and *gone*: tho, I think, *natural Liberty*, *abſolute Subjection*, and *invincible* Appetite and Paſſions, ſerve the Purpoſe of ſo many *Puppets* to the Doctor, which he makes to appear or diſappear, as either ſide of his contradictory Scheme requires.

THUS I have taken a View of the *Condition* of Man in the Fall, as the Caſe is repreſented by Dr. *Morgan*: And tho I readily yield to the Doctor, that this is *in part* Mr. *Barclay*'s Scheme, becauſe part of what the Doctor has advanced will unavoidably follow from the Princi-

ples Mr. *Barclay* has laid down; yet this is by no means a *Vindication* of that *Author*, becauſe the very *reverſe* to *ſome of this* is likewiſe a Part of his Scheme. Mr. *Barclay* allows that Man in the Fall, without ſupervening Grace, is a *rational Creature*; that he has Reaſon as a *natural Faculty* of his Soul, by which he can diſcern things that are *rational*; that he has a *ſinful Nature*, is a *Sinner*, and the like; all which neceſſarily ſuppoſe *moral Agency*. So that Mr. *Barclay*'s Scheme ſtands *juſtly* charged with *Confuſion* and *Contradiction*, notwithſtanding Dr. *Morgan*'s Attempts to *defend* it. And,

THO the Doctor pretends, that his Scheme of the Condition of Man in the Fall is the *true Scripture-Account* of the Matter, yet in this I think the Scriptures are *injured*; becauſe I am perſuaded, that if you will examine them with *Care* and *Attention*, you will not be able to diſcover any ſuch thing. According to the Account there given, the *Conduct* of *Adam* and *Eve* beſpeaks them as much moral Agents *immediately after* their eating the forbidden Fruit, as *before*; and thus they continued all their Lives, for any thing that appears to the contrary: So that it does not appear, that the Fall had any *ſuch Effect* upon them, as to *deſtroy* their *moral Agency*. And thus it has been with their *Poſterity* thro' all Ages, excepting ſome *few Individuals*, in which the Caſe has been otherwiſe, thro' ſome *Defect* or *Diſorder* in the *particular Conſtitutions* of thoſe Individuals. And,

AS *Adam* and *Eve* were the common Parents of Mankind, from which our Species deriv'd their *Conſtitutions*; ſo our *reaſoning Faculty* (which with the Power of ſelf Motion conſtitutes us *moral Agents*) grows up and ripens with the *human Conſtitution*; is diſorder'd and recover'd *by*

and

and *with* the Diſorder and Recovery of *that Conſtitution*; weakens and decays with it, and the like. All which make it as *evident*, and are as *good Proof* that moral Agency is the Reſult of the human Conſtitution, and not of any ſupervening Grace, as the nature of the thing will admit; it ſtands upon the ſame Foot with, and is proved the ſame way, as *ſeeing* or *hearing*, or any other Power of the Mind is proved to be the *Reſult* of the human Conſtitution. And,

THIS I preſume will paſs for Proof with others, however it may with reſpect to Dr. *Morgan*; and poſſibly with him too, notwithſtanding his *Demand* of Proof in the preſent Caſe. For tho he maintains that his Scheme is *true Chriſtianity*, that his Performance is a Defence of *Chriſtianity it ſelf*, and the like fine things, with which he embelliſhes and ſets off his Diſcourſe; yet to do him Juſtice, I think he does not pretend that it is the *Truth* of the *Caſe*, but chuſes to make the *Bible* rather than *himſelf* anſwerable for the Scheme he has advanced. And whatever Concern the Doctor is under to ſupport and maintain Chriſtianity, yet I think (and I am not ſingular in my Opinion) that his Performances manifeſtly tend to *ſubvert* it, by his fathering ſuch Principles upon the Chriſtian Revelation, as render it *juſtly contemptible*.

WHAT end Dr. *Morgan* had in View in his engaging in this Controverſy, I do not pretend to judge of; but this I ſay, that as he has uſed me *ill*, without any *Provocation*, ſo he has *injured* the Chriſtian Religion, under a Shew of *defending* it. For what can render it more ridiculous, than that *wild* and *confuſed contradictory* Scheme which he charges it with; in which Man in the Fall is conſider'd as having the *Capacity of natural Reaſon*

it ſelf, and likewiſe that he has *natural Liberty*, and yet is *deſtitute* of *moral Agency*? That is to ſay, Man has what conſtitutes him a *moral Agent*, and yet *wants* moral Agency. Again, Man in the Fall has natural Liberty, and yet is abſolutely ſubjected to the Power of the Devil and his own Luſts; he has natural Liberty, and yet his Appetites and Paſſions are invincible: That is, Man in the Fall has *natural Liberty*, but *is not at liberty to uſe it*. This is Confuſion and Contradiction, and thus it will continue to be, except the Doctor by ſome very *nice Diſtinction* (like that betwixt *Certainty* and *abſolute* Certainty) can diſcharge it from it. However, to conclude the Matter, I will leave it to the World to judge betwixt us, who is doing the greateſt *Honour* or *Diſhonour*, *Service* or *Diſſervice*, to the Chriſtian Religion. And now to proceed,

Mr. *BEAVEN* has likewiſe appeared a *ſecond* time in Mr. *Barclay's Defence*; tho I think to as little Purpoſe as at *firſt*. I ſhall not follow him thro' all the *Windings* and *Diviſions*, by which he either *diverts* or *perplexes* the Queſtion, but only give a ſhort View of the Caſe; and thereby you will ſee the *Confuſion* of his *Scheme*, and the *Groundleſſneſs* of his *Triumphs*.

MAN, as I have elſewhere ſhewn, is in his natural Capacity a *moral Agent*; that is, he has in him the Faculties of *Intelligence* and *Activity*: Intelligence, by which he is capable of *thinking* or *taking in Ideas*, of diſcerning and judging of the Fitneſs or Unfitneſs, the Good or Evil of Actions, in a *moral Senſe*; or when taken in a moral View and Activity, by which he is capable of *Motion* or *Action*, that is, of *moving* his own Body, and other Bodies thereby, to the Perform-

ance of ſuch Actions, and the ſerving ſuch Purpoſes (whether good or evil in a *moral Senſe*, and under that Conſideration) as he voluntarily chuſes to apply them to, from ſuch Motives as are preſent to his Mind, and are to him the *Ground* and *Reaſon* of thoſe Actions. This is evidently the Caſe with reſpect to *moral Agency*, and this is evidently the Caſe of *Man* as he is a moral Agent. And,

FROM hence it will follow, not only that Man has natural Ability, or an inherent Power to do both *Good* and *Evil*, in a moral Senſe, and under that Conſideration, but alſo that he has natural Ability or inherent Power to do *all* that good and evil, which comes within the Reach of his Agency; and conſequently he has natural Ability to do *all* that good which is his *Duty* to do, or that is *neceſſary* to render him *acceptable* to his Maker. For as not any good Action can poſſibly be a Man's Duty, which is above his Agency to perform, ſo God is not ſuch an *unreaſonable* Being as to make ſuch Actions *neceſſary* to his Acceptance.

IF it ſhould be asked, whether God may not require ſome Actions from Men, which are *above* their natural Ability to perform, and by a *ſupernatural Operation* enable them to perform thoſe Actions? and, in ſuch a Caſe, whether it is not Men's *Duty* to perform them? and whether ſuch Performance be not *neceſſary* to render them acceptable to God?

I ANSWER: What God *may do* and what he *does do*, are *two* diſtinct Queſtions or Caſes. God may if he pleaſe require a blind Man to *diſtinguiſh Colours*, and a Cripple to *walk*, and he may give *Sight* to the one and *Strength* to the other for the Performance of them; but that he does

does do this, doth not appear, at leaſt, but in extraordinary Caſes. The Laws which God hath given Men to direct their Behaviour by, require the Performance only of *ſuch Actions*, as come within the Reach of *human Agency*, conſidering every Man's *Circumſtances* and *Condition* in life, and not ſuch as are *above* the Reach of that Agency. And if any Man thinks otherwiſe, then ſurely it lies upon him to produce thoſe Inſtances, and ſhew in *what Caſes* God requires more from Men than they have natural Ability to perform. And,

IF there are any ſuch Inſtances, this does not render Men more acceptable to God than otherwiſe they would be; becauſe our Acceptableneſs does not ariſe from the *Largeneſs* or the *Increaſe* of our Abilities, but from the *good Diſpoſition* there is in us to make a *right Uſe* of the Ability we have, whether it be great or ſmall, natural or ſupernatural. And therefore in all ſuch Caſes, ſupernatural Ability is not neceſſary to render Men acceptable to God, but only to perform *ſuch Actions*, and to ſerve *ſuch Purpoſes*, as without that Ability they were not capable of doing. So that a Man will be equally acceptable to God in the *right Uſe* of his *natural Ability*, as in the right Uſe of that and of all the ſupernatural Ability, which may be ſuppoſod to be added to it. And,

AS Man is a moral Agent, ſo he is hereby perfectly *free* and at *liberty*, either to *neglect* to make a *right* Uſe of, or to *abuſe* his Faculties, as he pleaſes. All *Force*, whether it be to Good or to Evil, being abſolutely *inconſiſtent* with and *deſtructive* of ſuch Agency; and every thing ſhort of Force being no other than *Excitement*, Man therefore, as a moral Agent, has and muſt have *Power*, and be at *liberty*, eit her

either to *follow* or to *reject* every Excitement, which is made preſent to his Mind, either by Argument or any other way; and whether what he is excited to be good or evil.

IF it ſhould be asked, as in Page 23, 24 of Mr. *Beaven*'s Tract, *viz.* 'If Goodneſs be 'thought ſo *inſeparable* from the Nature of God, 'as that it is not poſſible for him to *do evil*; 'what if Evil be thought ſo *inſeparable* from 'the *ſinful Nature* of fallen and degenerate Man, 'as that it is not poſſible for him to *do good*, re-'garding ſpiritual things, without the good and '*ſupernatural Operation* of God in him, to en-'lighten and quicken him thereunto: Is this to '*limit* the Agency of Man, more than the A-'gency of God is ſuppoſed to be limited, as 'above?'

I ANSWER: If this were admitted, then there would not be Agency but *Fatality*, or being *acted upon* by ſome foreign Agent, in either Caſe. For if God were under a neceſſity of *doing good*, and Men were under a like neceſſity of *doing evil*, they would not be Agents. And the good or evil which would be performed by their Inſtrumentality, would not be good or evil in a *moral Senſe*: That is, God would not be a *good* Being, nor Man an *evil* Being, upon the account of it; Agency and Neceſſity being directly *oppoſite* and *contrary* to each other, whether Mr. *Beaven* diſcerns it or not. And if *Neceſſity* does not take place in either Caſe, but *moral Agency*; and God is a *good Being*, upon the account of that Good which is performed by him; and Man an *evil Being*, upon the account of that Evil which he performs; then it will unavoidably follow, that God has *Power* and is at *liberty* to *do evil*, and that Man has *Power* and is at *liberty* to *do good*. And,

THO

THO there is not any thing in Nature, which affords an *Excitement* or *Temptation* to God to *do evil*, and from hence ariſes a *moral Certainty*, that he never will do it; yet this is by no means the Caſe of Man with reſpect to *good*: becauſe Nature affords a *proper Motive* or Excitement to him (as a moral Agent) to *do good*. And he is at liberty to act from that Motive, and ſo can do it if *he will*; and that too in things *ſpiritual*, if by ſpiritual be meant what is good in a *moral Senſe*. But if that be not meant, then the Diſtinction of things *ſpiritual*, I think, is an *Amuſement*; it is uſing a Term without any fixed Idea to it.

IF it ſhould be asked, whether Man can be an *Agent* and a *Patient* alſo?

I ANSWER: He can be both in *different* Actions, but not in the ſame Action. A *Phyſician* may recommend to me frequent Walking, as proper for my Health; and in my *receiving* his Advice I am a *Patient only*; and if I *follow* that Advice, and walk accordingly, in this I am an *Agent only*. The Caſe is the ſame if *God* ſhould kindly interpoſe, and make any Motive or Propoſition preſent to my Mind; in this I am a *Patient only*. And if that Motive or Propoſition be the *Ground* or *Reaſon* of my acting in that Action, I am an *Agent only*. To be an Agent and a Patient in the *ſame Action*, is a manifeſt *Contradiction*: it is to act and not to act in the ſame Action. So that in every good Action which Man performs, he is an *Agent only*; and if *God* were to interpoſe and perform that good Action *in* and *by him*, in that Caſe he would be a *Patient only*.

IF it ſhould be asked, whether *two Agents* can *co-operate* or *work together* in producing the *ſame Action*?

I ANSWER: that *two* Agents may act together, and produce the *ſame Effect*, but not the *ſame Action*. *Two* Men may act together, and by their united Strength *lift* a *Weight*, or *ring* a *Bell*, which neither of them could do ſingly: But then in this Caſe their Actions are as *diſtinct* as their Perſons, the one acts, and the other acts, and both their Actions produce the *ſame Effect*. The Caſe is the ſame, if *God* ſhould interpoſe and co-operate or act with Man in producing any Effect. As far as the Agency of *God* is concerned, ſo far it is God's *Action*; and as far as *Man's* Agency is concerned, ſo far it is Man's *Action*, and no farther. Neither is Man *commendable*, or *blameable*, in any Action, any farther than his *own Agency* is exerted in that Action. And,

HERE, I preſume, my Reader will ſee how *vain* and *trifling* Mr. *Beaven* is, in garniſhing his Book with this general Title, *viz. God's Agency and Man's Agency co-working in the Salvation of Man*. For if by *co-working* he means that *God* and *Man* co-operate, to produce the *ſame Action*; this is an *Abſurdity*, and is therefore *falſe*, as I have before ſhewn. And if he means that God and Man co-operate, to produce the *ſame Effect*; tho this may be true, yet it is not to the Purpoſe: Becauſe Man's *Acceptableneſs* to God does not ariſe from what God does, but only from what *Man himſelf* does, in producing that Effect. God may repreſent or make preſent to the Sinner's Mind a View of the *Vileneſs* of his *Conduct*, and the *Danger* he is in, upon that account. And this may be to the Sinner the *Ground* and *Reaſon* of his Repentance and Reformation. Here we ſee *God acts*, and *Man acts*; but then it is not what God does, but only what the *Sinner* does, which renders him the *Object* of Divine Acceptance,

ance, and which is the *Ground* and *Reaſon* of God's Favour to him. God repreſents to the Sinner a *View* of his Condition; but then if the Sinner does not *repent* and *amend* upon that View, (which is *wholly his own Act*) God's Act will be ſo far from ſaving him, that on the contrary it will be an Aggravation of his *Condemnation*. And in this Caſe, there is no *new*, no *ſupernatural Ability* afforded or added to the Sinner, neither does God's Act enable him to do what he could not do, antecedent to or without that Act; but only hereby he is applied to in a *proper way*, as he is a *moral Agent*, in order to prevail upon him to do what he *could do*, but *would not*, or *did not*. And if ſuch a *co-working*, as aforeſaid, be what Mr. *Beaven* intends in the Work of Man's Salvation, then his putting the aforeſaid *Title* to his Book, and offering it as a *Rejoyner* to mine, is *foul practiſing*; becauſe it is what I have not oppoſed. The Queſtion betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay* is not, whether the Agency of God is concerned in the Salvation of Man? but whether *Man* in his natural Capacity, as Man, has in him a natural Ability, or an inherent Power to *do good in a moral Senſe*, without a ſupernatural Influence to enable him thereunto? And this Queſtion is ſuch a *Choke-Pill* to Mr. *Beaven*, that he had rather introduce *twenty* other Queſtions, than confine himſelf to it; which in the preſent Caſe he ought to do. And,

AS Man is at liberty to *neglect* to make a *right Uſe* of, or to *abuſe* his *natural Faculties*, as he pleaſes; ſo if he does neglect or abuſe them, this does not *deſtroy* his *Faculties*, nor *diſable* him from making a right uſe of them. If a Man is *ſlothful*, and thereby is *ignorant* of what he otherwiſe might and would have known, he does not here-

by fall under a *Neceſſity* of always continuing ſo, except ſome foreign Agent interpoſe and *rouſe* him out of it: but, on the contrary, he has *Power*, and is at *liberty* to *rouſe himſelf*, that is, to call his neglected Faculties into *Exerciſe*, and to uſe the Means for the Attainment of that *Knowledge*, which thro' his Sloth and Negligence he has hitherto been ignorant of. In like manner, if a Man ſhould invade his Neighbour's *Property*, or perform any other *vicious* Action, or if he ſhould *neglect* what was his *Duty* to do; in ſuch a Caſe he does not hereby fall under a *Neceſſity* of going on in that Practice always, except ſome foreign Agent interpoſe and *prevent* him: but, on the contrary, he has *power*, and is at *liberty* to look back upon his Actions or his neglect of Duty, to ſee the Unfitneſs and Vileneſs of it, and to correct and amend his ways for the future. And if he ſhould *perſiſt* in his Wickedneſs, his *After-Actions* are as much the Produce of *Choice* or *Election*, as the *firſt*. He had Power, and was at liberty, to have choſe and done the contrary: And this renders thoſe Actions *criminal*, which otherwiſe they would not be. And therefore,

SUPPOSING *all Mankind*, without any Exception, have *abuſed* their *Agency*, that is, have entered into a wicked Courſe of Life, and *careleſly* gone on in it, without reflecting on their Conduct, or have *obſtinately* perſiſted in it, notwithſtanding ſuch Reflections: What Advantage will this afford to Mr. *Barclay*'s Scheme? Why truly none at all; becauſe the *Neglect* or *Abuſe* of Man's natural Faculties does not *deſtroy* or *take away* the right Uſe of them; he has Power, and is at liberty rightly to uſe them, *after he has abuſed them*, as well as before that Abuſe: and becauſe the Queſtion betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay*

is not, whether all Men have abuſed their Faculties? but whether *Man in the Fall* has natural Ability, without a ſupernatural Influence, *rightly* to uſe them or not? So that here is no ſuch *Conceſſion* in favour of Mr. *Barclay*'s Scheme, as Mr. *Beaven* vainly boaſts of.

BUT, ſays Mr. *Beaven*, if all Mankind have abuſed their Faculties, then ſupernatural Influences are *neceſſary* or *uſeful* to the Salvation of all. Now if this be admitted, what Advantage would Mr. *Barclay*'s Scheme receive hereby? Why juſt as much as in the former Caſe. Supernatural Influences are neceſſary or uſeful to all: But then what are they uſeful for? Not ſurely to put Men in a Capacity of *moral Agency*; becauſe that they are *without* thoſe Influences; not to furniſh Men with Ability to do their *Duty*, becauſe they muſt have ſuch Ability *antecedent* to the Divine Interpoſition; for otherwiſe there could be no ſuch thing as *Duty* in the Caſe: But they are uſeful or neceſſary to *perſuade* Men (if they will be prevailed upon, that being the ſubject of their *own Choice*) to make a *right Uſe* of that Ability they already have. And as the Queſtion betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay* is not, whether ſupernatural Influences are uſeful or neceſſary to anſwer the Purpoſe aforeſaid? but only whether Man *has* or *has not* natural *Ability* for the Performance of his Duty? ſo the pretended *Conceſſions* which Mr. *Beaven* makes the Grounds of his *Triumphs* over me, are of no ſervice to Mr. *Barclay*'s Cauſe.

AND if my Conceſſions are ſuch as Mr. *Beaven* pretends, ſo that Mr. *Barclay* and I are of the ſame Opinion herein; how then come my Principles to be ſo very *injurious* and *hurtful*, as they are repreſented to be? And how comes Mr.

Mr. *Beaven* to repreſent me as ‘ *diſclaiming* and ‘ *exploding* all ſupernatural Help from Jeſus Chriſt ‘ to Men, even under the moſt inveterate Habits ‘ of Wickedneſs; and that with an open Face ‘ too ?’ *Page* 38. Surely, if Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles and mine are ſo nearly allied, with reſpect to ſupernatural Influences, as Mr. *Beaven* repreſents them; then what he has ſaid above bears hard upon Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles as well as mine; or rather, if the Caſe be as he repreſents it, then it is an *unjuſt* Charge upon us both. But to return:

AS Man is capable of neglecting or abuſing his Faculties, and thereby of incurring the Divine Diſpleaſure; ſo he is capable of being *applied to* by other Agents, in order to his Repentance and Reformation, and thereby to reſtore him again to the Divine Favour. He is capable of being *awakened*, or *called upon*, to conſider his ways, to reflect upon his Conduct, to ſee how vile and wicked his Actions are, and what Unhappineſs and Miſery he is drawing upon himſelf.

AND this is the End and Purpoſe which *Divine Revelation* and *Divine ſupernatual Influences* are ſubſervient to, in the preſent Caſe. So that the Uſefulneſs of ſupernatural Influences does not ariſe from Man's *Incapacity* to reflect upon and conſider his ways, nor from a *natural Incapacity* to correct and amend them; becauſe he is always capable of theſe, as he is a *moral Agent* and an *accountable Creature*; his *natural Ability* to do good and evil, in a moral Senſe, being the ſame both *with* and *without* a ſupernatural Influence. But the Uſefulneſs of ſuch Influences ariſes from Mens *voluntarily* perſiſting in a wicked Courſe of life: For when that is their Caſe, as it is exceed-

ing *kind* and *good* in God that he will uſe any means to bring them to Repentance and Reformation; ſo his applying to them, as above, is a *proper way* to work upon them as *moral Agents*, to bring them to that Repentance and Reformation. And,

AS God's kindly interpoſing, as aforeſaid, is not an *Evidence againſt* but *for* Man's having natural Ability to do his Duty; ſo St. *Paul* uſes it as an Argument to perſuade Men to a *right Uſe* and Application of that Ability: *Work out* (ſays he) *your own Salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Which is as if he had ſaid; ſeeing *Almighty God*, who reaps no Advantage from the good Actions of Men, and yet out of mere *Good-will* to them, kindly interpoſes and awakens in them a Senſe of what they ought both *to will* and *to do*; how much more ought Men to uſe their utmoſt *Care* and *Diligence* to conduct their Actions a-right, foraſmuch as hereby they purſue their *own good*, and ſecure to themſelves their *own Salvation?* For if *God* ſhews *ſuch a Regard* for the Happineſs of his Creatures; then certainly thoſe Creatures ought to ſhew the *utmoſt Care* and *Regard* for themſelves.

THUS, Sir, I have given you a ſhort View of the Caſe, that is, of the *natural Condition of Man in the Fall*; and, I think, have diſcharged it from that *Confuſion* and *Abſurdity*, which Mr. *Beaven* and his Scheme have perplexed it with. What remains, is to inquire wherein the moſt *material Difference* lies betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay*, with reſpect to the Condition of Man in the Fall; what the *Queſtion* ariſing from hence is; and what *Proof* has been offered on either ſide.

Mr.

Mr. *BARCLAY* maintains, that Man, as he is in the Fall, *cannot do good*, with reſpect to things ſpiritual, (by which I underſtand what is good in a moral Senſe) without a ſupernatural Influence: and that without ſuch Influence he is either by his own natural Compoſition, or by the Agency of the Serpent, *neceſſarily determined to do evil*; and that this is the natural Condition of *all Mankind* both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This, I think, appears plainly to be his Senſe, if his Words have any *fixed Ideas* to them; and therefore all that Complaint which has been made againſt me of *miſrepreſenting* Mr. *Barclay*, is perfectly groundleſs. And that this is a *juſt* Repreſentation of Mr. *Barclay*'s, Mr. *Beaven*'s, and the *Quakers* Senſe herein, is moſt evident from Mr. *Beaven*'s own Repreſentation thereof; allowing him to be a proper Judge in the Caſe. His Words are as follows:

Page 23, 24. 'IF *Goodneſs* be thought ſo *in-* 'ſeparable from the Nature of God, as that it is 'not poſſible for him to *do Evil*; what if *Evil* be 'thought ſo *inſeparable* from the *ſinful Nature* of 'fallen and degenerate Man, as that it is not 'poſſible for him to *do Good*, regarding ſpiritual 'Things, without the good and *ſupernatural* 'Operation of God in him, to enlighten and 'quicken him thereunto? Is this to *limit* the 'Agency of *Man*, more than the Agency of God 'is ſuppoſed to be limited, as above?'

HERE we ſee Mr. *Beaven* conſiders *Evil* ſo inſeparable from the *ſinful Nature* of fallen Man, as that it is not *poſſible* for him to do *good*, regarding ſpiritual Things, without a ſupernatural Influence. Which is the ſame in effect with what I have ſet forth in the *two Propoſitions*, by which I have expreſſed Mr. *Barclay*'s Senſe of this

matter. And tho the Repreſentation, which is here given, of the Condition of the *natural Man* be put by way of *Query*, yet I think it may juſtly be preſumed, that Mr. *Beaven* intended to expreſs *his*, and Mr. *Barclay*'s, and the *Quakers* Senſe of the helpleſs Condition of *Man in the Fall* hereby; or elſe his arguing from a *Neceſſity* of doing good, and an *Impoſſibility* of doing evil in *God*, for a like Neceſſity of *doing evil*, and an Impoſſibility of *doing good* in *Man* regarding ſpiritual Things without a ſupernatural Influence, is no way to his Purpoſe. And,

AS Mr. *Barclay*'s Senſe of the Condition of Man in the Fall *is*, as I have repreſented it above, ſo I maintain, in oppoſition to him, That Man, as *Man*, or in his *natural Capacity*, is a *moral Agent*; and as ſuch has in him natural Ability, or an inherent Power to do both *good* and *evil* in a *moral Senſe*, without a ſupernatural Influence; yea, that he has natural Ability to do *all* that *good* which is his *Duty* to do, or that is *neceſſary* to render him acceptable to his Maker.

SO that the State of the Caſe or Point in controverſy is reſolved into this ſhort Iſſue, *viz.* whether Man, in his natural Condition as Man, *can* or *cannot* do good, in a *moral Senſe*, without a ſupernatural Influence? The Caſe is plain and obvious, and may eaſily be brought to a Deciſion: It is but to prove the *Negative* or the *Affirmative* ſide of this ſingle Queſtion, and then the Controverſy *is*, or at leaſt *ought* to be, at an End.

I HAVE offered what I eſteem *Proof* on the *Affirmative* ſide, and ſhewn that Man in his natural Capacity, without a ſupernatural Influence, *is* a *moral Agent*. Now admitting that I have proved

proved this Point, it will unavoidably follow, that Man has *Power*, and is at *liberty* not only to do both good and evil in a moral Senſe, without a ſupernatural Influence, but alſo that he has natural Ability, or an inherent Power, to do *all* that *good* which is is *Duty* to do, or is neceſſary to render him *acceptable* to his *Maker*, without ſuch Influences. For whatever *Impotency* may attend our Species upon the *Fall* of *Adam*, if that Fall has not *deſtroyed* our *moral Agency*, as it is moſt evident it has not; then it will unavoidably follow, that the State of Man is as I have repreſented it; becauſe how weak ſoever Man may be ſuppoſed to be, his Duty muſt bear a *Proportion* to the Ability he has, whether it be great or ſmall. And therefore ſuppoſing an Action to be morally good, yet if a Man has not Ability to perform that Action, or to diſcover the moral Goodneſs of it, then that Action *cannot* be his Duty in thoſe Circumſtances, neither will God make the Performance of it *neceſſary* to his *Acceptance*.

THE Sum of the Point is this; I have proved that Man in his natural Capacity is a *moral Agent*, and as ſuch has Power and is at liberty to do *all that good* which is his Duty to do, without a ſupernatural Influence; and therefore can do it if he *will*: and conſequently that ſupernatural Influences are or may be *neceſſary* or *uſeful*, not to render Men capable of doing their Duty, that implying a *Contradiction*; becauſe where there is not a *Capacity*, there can be no *Duty*; but to prevail upon Men to do what was their Duty, and conſequently what they were capable of performing *antecedent* to ſuch Influence.

Mr. *BEAVEN*, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, oppoſes me. But what has he done? has he *invalidated* the *Evidence* I brought to prove my Point? or has he proved the contrary? that is, has he ſhewed that the *natural Reſult* of the Conſtitution of Man *is not* moral Agency, and that *Man* in his natural Capacity *is not* a moral Agent? No; this he has not done; this he could not do; and yet this was his Point, and if he had done this, then it would have follow'd that Man, as he is in the Fall, *would not* have had a *ſinful Nature*, *would not* have been *a Sinner*; which upon the *Quaker* Scheme he is ſuppos'd to be. But then the Queſtion will return, what has Mr. *Beaven* done? To which I think this general Anſwer may be given; that he has run into *Diviſions*, by which he has either *diverted* or *perplexed* the Queſtion. He pretends that I have made ſeveral *Conceſſions* in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, (the *Groundleſſneſs* of which I have before ſhewn) and likewiſe that Man may be an *Agent* and a *Patient alſo*; and that *God and Man co-work in the Salvation of Man*, and the like: all which are *foreign* to the Queſtion, as I have ſhewn. He likewiſe vouches the Authority of *Scripture* for his Opinion; but ſurely the Scriptures cannot make a *falſe Propoſition true*, which is the preſent Caſe; tho I grant he is not ſingular herein; almoſt *all Errors* among Chriſtians being father'd upon the *Scriptures*.

UPON the whole I obſerve, that as Mr. *Barclay's* Scheme ſtands charged with *Error*, *Confuſion* and *Contradiction*; ſo Mr. *Beaven* has not been able to *free* it from this Charge. And if he ſhall think fit to appear any more in Mr. *Barclay's* Defence, I deſire him to come to the Point, which as yet he has avoided. And I here once more remind him what the Point is, *viz.* not

what

what Man is, and what his Abilities are *by* and *with*, and *under* a ſupernatural Influence; but what Man is and what his Abilities are, conſider'd *abſtractedly from* and *without* ſuch Influence. Mr. *Barclay* maintains, and Mr. *Beaven* has undertaken to defend him herein, that Man as *Man*, or Man in the *Fall*, is either by his *own natural Compoſition*, or by the *Agency* of the *Serpent*, unavoidably determin'd to *do Evil*; and that he cannot *do Good*, regarding ſpiritual things, (by which I underſtand what is good in a moral Senſe) without a ſupernatural Influence. This I call an *Error*, and a *Miſrepreſentation of human Nature*; and, I think, have proved it to be ſo, by ſhewing that Man in his natural Capacity is a *moral Agent*, and conſequently that human Nature is not what Mr. *Barclay* has repreſented it to be. Now if Mr. *Beaven* has any thing farther to offer, which will *invalidate* the *Evidence*, whereby I have proved my ſide of the Queſtion, and which will prove the contrary; I ſhall think my ſelf concerned to conſider it. But if he ſhall proceed in *perplexing* and *diverting* the Queſtion, then I preſume it will not be expected that I ſhould follow him in ſuch a wild-gooſe Chaſe.

WHAT I have farther to obſerve is, that as in Mr. *Barclay's*, Mr. *Beaven's*, and the *Quakers* Scheme, Man in the Fall is conſider'd as *incapable* of doing Good, regarding ſpiritual things, without a ſupernatural Influence; and that he is unavoidably determin'd to *do Evil*; whilſt at the ſame time *Man* in the *Fall* is allow'd to be a *rational Creature*, who has Reaſon as a *natural Faculty* of his Soul, by which he can diſcern things that are *rational*; that he has a *ſinful Nature*, is a *Sinner*, and the like: This taken together, I call *Confuſion* and *Contradiction*; and, I preſume, it evi-

dently

dently appears to be ſo to every conſidering Man who attends to it. And,

AS Mr. *Barclay's* Scheme is *confuſed* and *contradictory*, ſo this I particularly recommended to the Conſideration of his Adherents in my *Second* Letter, preſuming they ought either to *clear* his Scheme from that Confuſion and Contradiction, or elſe to *give it up*. But ſeeing they do neither, this gives me an Occaſion of troubling you with a *Fourth* Letter, in order to enquire into the *Cauſe* of ſuch a Procedure, which I take to be this. The *Quakers* having been train'd up in the Belief of this Doctrine, *viz.* that Man, conſidered barely as Man, cannot *do Good* (regarding things ſpiritual) without a ſupernatural Influence; and that he is unavoidably determin'd to *do Evil*; and then reading the *Bible* with their Minds *preposſeſſed* with this Opinion, they are led to think that it is plainly and clearly taught therein. And as the *Bible* is allow'd to be the *Rule* of *Truth* and the *Word* of *God*, ſo whatever Doctrine is therein contained muſt be *Truth*: And conſequently, whilſt the *Bible* appears to them in *this Light*, the way to their *Conviction* is *barr'd* up. That then which lies before me, is not to make good my ſide of the Queſtion, that being ſufficiently cleared and proved already; but to remove (if it can be done) what ſtands in the way of the *Quakers Conviction*.

THE *Bible*, like a *Packhorſe*, is made to bear every Burden, which *weak* or *deſigning Men* are pleaſed to lay upon it; there not being any Doctrine, how *abſurd* and *ridiculous* ſoever, when adopted into this or that, or the other Scheme of Chriſtianity, but its Vouchers have ſome *Texts* of *Scripture* to father it upon. Thus the Doctrines of *Tranſubſtantiation*, and of *abſolute Election* and

Re-

Reprobation, are, by thoſe who adhere to them, ſaid to be contained in the *Scripture*; tho the one of theſe is *repugnant to*, and thereby is ſhewn to be falſe by our *Senſes*, and the other by our *Reaſon*. And tho, perhaps, there has not been any Set of Men, who have been *more divided* in their religious Opinions than the *Body* of *Chriſtians*, yet each and every of theſe have been ready to lay claim to the *Bible*, as a *common Parent* to their Principles, tho *different* and *contradictory* to each other. And thus it is with reſpect to the Point in queſtion; it being ſuppos'd that the following Queſtion, viz. *That Man cannot do good regarding ſpiritual Things, without a ſupernatural Influence*, is contained therein.

I SHALL not however take upon me to examine what is the *true Senſe* and *Meaning* of this or that Text of Scripture, with reſpect to the Point in hand; this would be a Work both *endleſs* and *uſeleſs*. It would be endleſs, becauſe after *ten* or *twenty* Texts are examin'd with reſpect to their *true Senſe*, ſo many more may be introduced to be examined, and ſo on, and that with reſpect to both ſides of the Queſtion; and this ſurely would be an *endleſs Work*. It would likewiſe be uſeleſs with reſpect to *fixing* and *ſettling* the Point in debate; becauſe after ſuch an Examination, each Party may think their Senſe of Scripture is the *true Senſe*, and ſo they would end where they began. This, I imagine, has often been the Caſe, and is likely to be ſo now. And therefore,

WHAT I propoſe is, that as the *Bible* is appealed to as the *Rule* of *Truth*, ſo I ſhall *firſt* ſhew what *Qualifications* are *abſolutely neceſſary* to take place in it, in order to render it *capable* of being ſuch a *Rule*. *Secondly*, I ſhall apply this to the

the Point in hand, by ſhewing how any Propoſition which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in *Scripture*, is affected by it. From which it will appear, that whilſt we conſider the *Bible* as the *Rule of Truth* and the *Word of God*, the following Propoſition, *viz. That Man cannot do what is morally good without a ſupernatural Influence*, ought not to be admitted as the *Senſe* of *Scripture*, or as *contained therein*, and conſequently, that the urging of Texts of Scripture to prove the above Propoſition is *trifling* in it ſelf, and is offering a manifeſt *Injury* to the Bible. *Thirdly* and *Laſtly*, I ſhall make ſome ſhort Reflections from the whole. And,

FIRST, I ſhall ſhew what *Qualifications* are *abſolutely neceſſary* to render the Bible *capable* of being the Rule of Truth; I ſay capable of being the Rule of Truth: For tho thoſe Qualifications do not *conſtitute* or *make* the Bible ſuch a Rule, yet if they were wanting, it would, in the nature of the thing, be *unqualified* for it. And therefore thoſe Qualifications are and muſt be abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary, to render the Bible *capable* of being the Rule of Truth, as aforeſaid. By the Bible's being the Rule of Truth, I mean it to be ſuch a *juſt* and *certain* Foundation of *Aſſent*, as will not *deceive* us in *all* or *any* of thoſe Points which are *diſcover'd* by it, and whoſe *Credibility* ariſes from, and is founded upon it. And,

1. The Bible muſt be *conſiſtent* with the *Nature* and the *Truth* of Things, in order to render it *capable* of being the *Rule of Truth*. And here I beg leave to reaſſume the Argument already laid down, in my Diſcourſe concerning *Perſecution*; and to obſerve, that if there are any Propoſitions

ons in the Bible, which, when rightly underſtood, are *repugnant* to the *Nature*, or to the *Truth* of Things, all ſuch Propoſitions muſt be allowed to be *falſe*. And if the Bible lays down a falſe Propoſition in *one* Inſtance, and with relation to *one* Point, then it may do the ſame in *any other* Inſtance, and with relation to *any other* Point. I ſay, that this *may* be the Caſe for any thing we know to the contrary, ſeeing it has not given us any *infallible Rule*, by which we can certainly judge which Propoſitions in the Bible are *true*, and which are *otherwiſe*. And from hence it will follow, that if the Bible be admitted as the *Rule of Truth*, then the fore-mention'd Qualification muſt be admitted as an *eſſential Property* of this Rule: And, conſequently, every Propoſition in the Bible, which in its *literal* Senſe is repugnant to the Nature, or to the Truth of Things, muſt be underſtood not *literally* but *figuratively*. And,

THAT I may not be miſunderſtood with regard to the Point in hand, I will give an Inſtance: *John* vii. 38. *He that believeth on me* (ſaith Chriſt) *out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water*. Now I ſay, that if the *Bible* be admitted as the *Rule* of *Truth*, then this Propoſition muſt be underſtood *figuratively*; becauſe the Terms of which it is compoſed, if underſtood literally, that is, if we apply to them thoſe Ideas which common Uſage has fix'd to them; then the Propoſition is plainly *repugnant* to the *Nature* and *Truth* of Things. And,

(1.) IT is repugnant to, or an Impoſſibility in, Nature, for Rivers of Water to flow out of a *Man's Belly*; ſuppoſing by the Term *Belly*, be meant that Part of a Man which is commonly called by that *Name*; and by the Terms *Rivers of Water*, be meant the flowing or running of ſuch

ſuch *large Quantities* of Water, as we commonly expreſs by the Term *Rivers*; which is the preſent Caſe. So that if the fore-mention'd Propoſition be underſtood *literally*, then it is repugnant to, and an Impoſſibility in, Nature, and therefore is *abſolutely falſe*. Again,

(2.) IT is repugnant to the Truth of Things, that is, it is a Propoſition manifeſtly falſe in fact; ſeeing believing in Chriſt, has not in any one Inſtance produced ſuch an Effect, as that out of the Believer's Belly have flowed *Rivers of Water*, as aforeſaid. And as any Propoſition, which is repugnant to the Nature or Truth of Things, cannot poſſibly be true; ſo from hence it will follow, that the Bible's being conſiſtent with the Nature and Truth of Things, is *abſolutely* and *eſſentially neceſſary* to render it *capable* of being the Rule of Truth. Again,

2. ANOTHER Qualification *abſolutely neceſſary* to render the Bible *capable* of being the Rule of Truth, is its being *uniform* and *conſiſtent with it ſelf*. If the Bible ſhould contain Propoſitions, which, when rightly underſtood, are plainly *inconſiſtent with*, and *contradictory* to each other; then one or other of them muſt confeſſedly be *falſe*. For tho each of thoſe Propoſitions, when conſider'd alone, is not repugnant to the Nature of things, and ſo in that reſpect either of them *may* be true; yet if when they are taken together, one is an *apparent Contradiction* to the other, of Neceſſity one of them muſt be *falſe*. And if the Bible lays down a falſe Propoſition in *one Inſtance*, it may in another (as I obſerv'd above.) And, conſequently, if this were the Caſe, then nothing could be *fairly* concluded from the Bible, and the Bible would juſtly be *excluded* from being the Rule of Truth in any Point whatever. And,

AS the Bible muſt be uniform and conſiſtent with it ſelf, in order to render it *capable* of being the Rule of Truth; ſo conſequently, if there are any Propoſitions in it which ſeem to *claſh with*, and to *contradict* each other, then one of theſe muſt *yield* to the other; that is, the Senſe of one or other of them muſt be *ſo changed* from what it appears to be, as that thoſe ſeeming contradictory Propoſitions may be perfectly *reconciled*. Again,

3. AND *laſtly*, Another Qualification *abſolutely neceſſary* to render the *Bible capable* of being the Rule of Truth, is, that it muſt be a *proper Application* to the *Underſtandings* of *Men*: By which I mean, that the Author muſt *intend* to be *underſtood* in all * that is therein contained; and conſequently that the Bible muſt contain only *ſuch Subjects* as are diſcernible by, and come within the Reach of the *human Underſtanding*. And thoſe Subjects muſt be deliver'd in *ſuch a way*, as is likely not to *miſlead*, but to *inform Mankind*. For,

IF the Bible was intended to be underſtood only in *ſome* Parts of it, and if the Author intended that the other Parts ſhould not be underſtood; then the Bible is *unqualified* for being the Rule of Truth in any Point; becauſe it has not given us any Rule by which we can judge which Parts are *intended* to be underſtood, and which not: ſo that thoſe Parts of the Bible which ſeem to us moſt plain, and from which

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* *Note*, I here except all Prophecies out of the Caſe: For as they cannot, in the nature of the Thing, be Evidences, until they are compleated; ſo the underſtanding them before their Completion is of no uſe.

we think we receive a true Information, may be the *moſt difficult*, and may only ſerve more effectually to *miſlead* us. I ſay, that this *may* be the Caſe for any thing we know, or for any Grounds we have, from whence we may juſtly conclude the contrary. For as every Propoſition contained in the Bible is expreſſed in words, which *common Uſage* has fixed Ideas to, and as we have no Rule laid down in the Bible by which we can form a Judgment in the preſent Caſe; ſo from hence it will follow, that we muſt be under the *greateſt uncertainty*, which Propoſitions are *intended* to be underſtood, and which not; and therefore if the Bible be admitted as the *Rule* of *Truth*, then the aforeſaid Qualification muſt be admitted as an *eſſential Property* of this Rule. And,

IF the Bible was intended to be underſtood in *all* the Parts of it, then it muſt contain only *ſuch Subjects* as are diſcernible by, and come within the Reach of the *human Underſtanding*; and all Subjects that are above it, are neceſſarily *excluded* from the Bible. For tho there may be in Nature ſuch Subjects as are above the human Underſtanding, that is, of which we are not capable of taking in any Ideas concerning them; yet if there were any ſuch in the Bible, they would be expreſſed in Words which have *certain Ideas* annex'd to them by common Uſage. And this would involve us in the Difficulty I mention'd above; ſeeing (as I obſerv'd) we have no Rule by which we can judge which Subjects come *within* the Reach of the human Underſtanding, and which are *above* it: And conſequently, if this were the Caſe, then the Bible would juſtly be *excluded* from being the *Rule* of *Truth* in any Point whatever. Again,

IF

IF the Bible is intended to be underſtood in *all* the Parts of it, then the Subjects therein contained muſt be delivered in *ſuch a way* as is likely not to *miſlead* but to *inform* Mankind: For if there were ſome Propoſitions in the Scriptures deliver'd in ſuch a way as naturally and apparently tended to *miſlead* us, and if the Uſe of Language was *perverted* in ſome Inſtances; then it might be ſo in a *thouſand* more, or in any Inſtance which might be referr'd to, ſeeing it has not given us any *infallible Rule*, by which we can judge when it deals fairly and candidly with us, and when otherwiſe: Neither is there conſtituted an *infallible living Judge* to give an abſolute and certain Determination in the preſent Caſe. And conſequently if this were the Caſe, then the Scriptures would be juſtly *excluded* from being the Rule of Truth in any Point whatever.

GOD is a Being, in whom all *moral Perfections* take place in the higheſt degree; and as he could not have any low or mean End in giving a Revelation to his Creatures, ſo much leſs would he do it in a way which naturally and apparently tended to miſlead them. The right informing our *Minds*, and the right conducting our *Lives*, muſt be the Ends, which a wiſe and a good God had in view in giving a Revelation to Mankind; and therefore he would certainly give it in ſuch a way as was *moſt ſubſervient* to theſe Ends. And,

THO Diſtance of Time and Place, the Alteration of Languages, the Errors of Tranſcribers and Tranſlators, and a variety of other things may introduce *Errors* into the Text, and lay a Foundation for *Miſtakes* with reſpect to the Senſe of Scripture; yet this does not alter the Caſe with reſpect to the *Intention* of the *Author*.

He muſt intend it for a *publick Good*, and therefore muſt intend that it ſhould be *underſtood*.

LET us then take heed how we repreſent the *Bible* as a *dark* and a *myſterious* Revelation: For this is to conſider it as intended only to put the human Underſtanding upon the *Rack*, and to perplex and miſlead it. Man is naturally an inquiſitive Creature; and if a Revelation comes forth under the Character of *Divine*, this Character heightens his Inclination to look into it, that he may know what his Creator ſays *to him*, and *concerning him*. And as God's End in giving a Revelation was, that it might rightly direct our Minds and Lives; ſo the Nature of the thing requires that it be deliver'd in ſuch a way as is moſt *plain* and *eaſy* to be underſtood. And conſequently, if we admit the *Bible* to be the Rule of Truth and the Word of God, and yet conſider it as a dark and myſterious Revelation; this is to repreſent it as *unworthy* of that Being, whom we conſider as its Author.

Note, THOSE Propoſitions in the *Bible*, which are *ſelf-evident*, or which are the *neceſſary Reſult* of Propoſitions that are ſelf-evident, that is, whoſe Evidence ariſes from the *Nature of Things*; theſe are out of the Caſe: becauſe theſe are true in themſelves, and upon a due Examination will evidently appear to be ſo, whether the *Bible* be admitted as the Rule of Truth or not. So that the Propoſitions which come into the preſent Queſtion are ſuch only, as are *diſcoverable* by the *Bible*, and whoſe *Credibility* ariſes from, and is founded upon it.

IF it ſhould be urged, that tho there is not any thing deliver'd in the *Bible* with an *Intention* to miſlead Mankind, nor any Subjects contained therein that are *abſolutely* above the Reach

of

of the human Underſtanding, yet there may be ſuch as are above it, conſidering Man in his *fallen State*; and that *God* may interpoſe, and by the *Operation* of his *Spirit* enable Men to underſtand the Scriptures, and thereby to take in thoſe Subjects, which, antecedent to his Interpoſition, they were not capable of diſcerning.

I ANSWER: This is repreſenting Almighty God as acting a very *ſtrange* Part by his Creatures; Man is conſider'd as *fallen* before the Revelation was given, and this Revelation is given him in his *fallen State* conſider'd as ſuch; yea, his being fallen is the *Occaſion* of this Gift of God to him: And yet it is ſuppoſed that *Part* of it is *above* his Capacity to underſtand. And this is ſo intermixed, without any *Rule* of *Diſtinction*, as that not any thing can be *juſtly* and *certainly* concluded from it, which muſt render it in a great meaſure *uſeleſs*. And ſuppoſing God does *interpoſe*, and by his Spirit impreſs upon Mens Minds thoſe *Truths*, which lie *concealed* in the Scriptures, and give Men a *Capacity* to take in thoſe Subjects, which, antecedent to his Interpoſition, they were not capable of *diſcerning*, yet this does not alter the Caſe at all; becauſe it is not from the *Bible*, but from the *Spirit*, that fallen Man receives his Impreſſions, his Informations, and his Capacity, as aforeſaid: So that the *Bible*, upon this Suppoſition, is but of *little Uſe* to Mankind. And,

UPON a Suppoſition, that fallen Man is under an *Incapacity* to underſtand the Scriptures, as aforeſaid; then I would ask, how any Man can *certainly know* or have any *rational Satisfaction*, that the Impreſſions he is under are *Divine*, or that the Ideas he takes in by thoſe Impreſſions are *Truths* or not

IF it ſhould be ſaid, that thoſe Impreſſions *evidence themſelves* to be *Divine*, and conſequently that the Propoſitions convey'd or diſcovered by thoſe Impreſſions, are *Divine Truths*.

I ANSWER: That if thoſe Impreſſions evidence themſelves to the *Men* who receive them, that they are *divine*; then this ſuppoſes ſome *common Principle* which all Impreſſions are to be *tried* and *judged* of by, and likewiſe a *Capacity* in fallen Man to *examine* and *try* thoſe Impreſſions by that Principle, and to *diſtinguiſh* and *judge* whether they are divine or not. But then this is *giving* to fallen Man with one Hand, what has been *taken from him* with the other: This is *allowing* him that Capacity which he is ſuppoſed to be *deſtitute* of. For if there be ſome *common Principle* which all Impreſſions are to be tried by, and if there be in fallen Man a *Capacity* to diſtinguiſh and judge of all Impreſſions by that Principle; then there is in fallen Man a *Capacity* to diſcern and judge of *divine Revelations* alſo: becauſe all *Revelations* and *Impreſſions* ſtand upon a foot with reſpect to their *Divinity*, and becauſe the ſame Capacity which enables a Man to take in the *Idea* of a Propoſition by a *divine Impreſſion*, will enable him to take in the *Idea* of the ſame Propoſition by a *divine Revelation*.

IF it ſhould be ſaid, that the *Truth* of the Propoſition and the *Divinity* of the Impreſſion, are evinced by the *Pleaſure* and *Satisfaction* that ariſe from ſuch Impreſſions, and from the Truths convey'd by them:

I ANSWER, That this cannot afford any *rational Satisfaction*, and that it makes way for any *Deluſion*; becauſe when a Man is perſuaded that he is under a *divine* Impreſſion, and that the Propoſition which is preſent to his Mind is a *divine* Truth; this Perſuaſion will be a *Founda-*

tion for Pleaſure and Satisfaction to him, whether it be *well* or *ill grounded*; that is, whether he be *deluded* with regard to the *Divinity* of that Impreſſion, and the *Truth* of that Propoſition, *or not*. Again,

IF the Truth of the Propoſition, and the Divinity of the Impreſſion, are to be inferred from the *Force* and *Strength* of the Impreſſion on the Mind; then Man is in a very *unguarded* State, and lies open to all *Deluſion* and *Impoſition*: Becauſe not only when we are *aſleep*, but alſo in our *waking Hours*, many Ideas ſtrike *forcibly* on the Imagination; and if they are cheriſhed and indulged, will make a *ſtrong Impreſſion* on the Mind, will raiſe our *Deſires*, our *Hopes*, or *Fears*, or whatever *Paſſion* they are ſuited to affect. And this will be the Caſe, whether the Object be *real* or *fictitious*. So that if the *Strength* of Impreſſions is made the *Mark* of their Divinity, then a Door is opened to the moſt wild and extravagant *Enthuſiaſm*. Again,

IF the Divinity of an Impreſſion, and the Truth of a Propoſition thus preſented to the Mind, are to be inferred from the *Conformity* of that Propoſition to the *Scriptures*; then ſuppoſing the *Truth* of the Propoſition will *follow* from hence, yet the *Divinity* of the Impreſſion *is not* in the leaſt *proved* by it: becauſe whilſt we conſider the *Bible* as the *Word* of *God*, it is very natural for *thoſe Propoſitions* which we diſcover, or think we diſcover in it, to occur *frequently* and *ſtrongly* to our Minds, without a Divine Impreſſion to produce them.

TO apply this to the Point in debate betwixt me and the *Quakers*: I will ſuppoſe a Man to have this Propoſition ſtrongly impreſſed upon his Mind, *viz.* That *Man cannot do what is morally good without a ſupernatural Influence*, and that the

Impreſſion and the *Propoſition* afford him a great deal of *Pleaſure* and *Delight*. Then the Queſtion will be, what *rational Satisfaction* he can have that the Impreſſion is *Divine*, or that the Propoſition attending it is the *Truth*, if the *Strength* of the Impreſſion or the *Pleaſure* which attends it be made the Mark? Then here is no rational Satisfaction, becauſe *Error* and *Deluſion* may ſtrike the Mind as *ſtrongly*, and may afford as much *Pleaſure*, as *Truth it ſelf*. If the Propoſition's being conſiſtent with, or contained in, *Scripture* is made the Mark; then with reſpect to the *Divinity* of the Impreſſion here is no rational Satisfaction, becauſe here is nothing from whence ſuch a Concluſion may *juſtly* and *certainly* be inferred. And as to the *Truth* of the Propoſition, the Appeal is removed from the *Impreſſion*, and made wholly to the *Bible*. And,

IF the *Evidence* for the Truth of the above Propoſition be ſuppoſed to ariſe only from the *Scripture*, then Man is ſuppoſed to be qualified to *judge* of the Senſe of Scripture, *independent* of any divine Impreſſions; and the Scriptures are ſuppoſed to have all thoſe *Qualifications*, which are abſolutely neceſſary to render them *capable* of being the Rule of Truth; one of which Qualifications is, that they muſt be conſiſtent with the *Nature* and the *Truth* of things: For otherwiſe nothing can *rationally* and *certainly* be concluded from them, as I have ſhewn above. And,

THEREFORE if the above Propoſition, *viz.* That *Man cannot do what is morally good without a ſupernatural Influence*, be repugnant to the Nature or Truth of things (as I ſhall hereafter ſhew that it is repugnant to both) and if the *Bible* be the Rule of Truth, as it is here ſuppoſed to be; then it will unavoidably follow,

not

not only that the *Quakers misrepreſent* the Scriptures, by repreſenting them as containing the above Propoſition, but alſo that they are not under a *Divine Impulſe*, when that Propoſition is impreſſed upon their Minds as a *Scripture Truth*.

THUS I have gone thro' what I propoſed in the *firſt* place, and have ſhewn what *Qualifications* are abſolutely neceſſary to take place in the *Bible*, in order to render it *capable* of being the *Rule* of *Truth*. I now proceed,

SECONDLY, To apply what I have before laid down to the Point in hand, by ſhewing how any Propoſition, which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in Scripture, is *affected* by it; from which it will appear, that whilſt we conſider the *Bible* as the *Rule* of *Truth*, and the *Word* of *God*, the following Propoſition, *viz.* That *Man cannot do what is morally good without a ſupernatural Influence*, ought not to be admitted as the Senſe of Scripture, or as contained therein; and conſequently, that the urging Texts of Scripture to *prove* the above Propoſition, is *trifling* in it ſelf, and is offering a manifeſt *Injury* to the *Bible*. And,

HERE I obſerve, that tho the above Qualifications do not afford us a Rule of judging what is the *true* Senſe of Scripture in any one Inſtance; yet they do afford a certain Rule of judging what *is not* the Senſe of Scripture in a variety of Caſes, and ſo are a proper *Guard* and *Security* againſt manifold Errors. And therefore with reſpect to any Doctrine or Propoſition, which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in Scripture, the Queſtion ariſing from hence will be, whether that Doctrine or Propoſition appears to be *conſiſtent* with, or to be *repugnant* to, the *Nature* or *Truth* of things?

IF it does not appear to be repugnant to the Nature or Truth of things, then it will follow, that that Doctrine or Propoſition *may* be contained in Scripture; I ſay, may be contained, becauſe that is all which will follow from hence. For whether *it is* contained in Scripture *or not*, that muſt be proved from *ſuch Evidence* as is neceſſary to determine that Point. But if any Doctrine or Propoſition, which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in Scripture, does, upon Examination, evidently appear to be *repugnant* to the *Nature* or *Truth* of things; then it will unavoidably follow, not only that that Doctrine or Propoſition is *falſe*, but alſo that *it is not* contained in Scripture. For as the Scripture is the the *Rule* of *Truth*, and the *Word* of *God*, ſo it cannot poſſibly contain in it any *ſuch* Doctrine or Propoſition as aforeſaid; ſeeing we are aſſured from the Nature of the thing, that God will not thus attempt to *impoſe* upon and *miſlead* his Creatures.

THUS ſuppoſing it ſhould be urged, that the following Propoſition is contained in Scripture, *viz.* That *God has predetermined that a Multitude of Men ſhall be extremely and eternally miſerable in another World*; and, *that this Determination is the Reſult of mere ſovereign Pleaſure, conſidered abſtractedly from thoſe Mens voluntarily chuſing to make themſelves the proper Objects of his Diſpleaſure*: Then the Queſtion will be, whether this Propoſition be *conſiſtent* with, or *repugnant* to, the *Nature* or *Truth* of things?

IN anſwer to which it is to be obſerved, that as ſuch a Conduct is extremely *unjuſt* and *cruel*, and contrary to *Wiſdom* and *true Goodneſs*; and as God cannot but ſee the *Unfitneſs* and *Vileneſs* of ſuch a Behaviour; and, as he cannot poſſi-

poſſibly be under any *Temptation* to *Evil*; ſo from hence ariſes a *moral Certainty*, that he will not, out of mere Humour, make and ordain his Creatures to be extremely and eternally miſerable, as aforeſaid: And from hence it will follow, not only that the above Propoſition is *falſe*, but alſo that *it cannot* be contained in Scripture; becauſe we are aſſured that God will not publiſh ſo notorious a *Falſhood* to the World. And therefore,

IF any Man ſhould attempt to prove the above Propoſition from the *Bible*, and in order thereto ſhould collect a great number of Texts, and inſiſt that thoſe Texts, when *juſtly explained*, and *rightly underſtood*, do contain in them that Propoſition; this would be perfectly *vain* and *trifling*: becauſe as the *Bible* cannot poſſibly make a *falſe Propoſition true*, ſo it muſt not be admitted that the *Bible* contains in it *ſuch* a Propoſition, whilſt it is conſidered as the *Rule* of *Truth* and the *Word* of *God*. And to inſiſt that it is contained therein, is to offer a manifeſt *Injury* to the *Bible*. Again,

SUPPOSING it ſhould be urged, that the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* is contained in Scripture; that is, that a particular Compoſition of Particles of Matter, which being applied to the Senſes, raiſes in us the *Idea* of *Bread*, does inſtantly, upon the pronouncing a particular Form of Words (called *Conſecration*) by a Chriſtian Prieſt, being a-like applied to the Senſes, raiſe in us the *Idea* of *Fleſh*: then the Queſtion ariſing from hence will be, whether this Doctrine be *conſiſtent* with the *Nature* and with the *Truth* of things?

THAT it is conſiſtent with the Nature of things, I think, muſt be granted; becauſe, I preſume, it will be allowed, that God *can*, if he pleaſes,

pleaſes, interpoſe, and change Bread into Fleſh. This being allowed, the Queſtion will be, whether the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation be *conſiſtent* with the *Truth* of things? that is, whether it be *true* or *falſe* in Fact, that God does thus interpoſe, and change Bread into Fleſh, upon the Prieſt's pronouncing the words of Conſecration? And foraſmuch as it evidently appears from *Experience*, that no ſuch Change is wrought, as is here ſuppoſed, but, on the contrary, the particular Compoſition of Particles of Matter, upon which the Change is ſaid to be made, appears to be Bread *after* Conſecration as much as *before it*; ſo from hence it will unavoidably follow, not only that the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantion is *falſe*, but alſo that no ſuch Doctrine is contained in *Scripture*; becauſe we are aſſured that God will not be guilty of ſo much *Falſhood* and *Impoſition*.

IF it ſhould be ſaid, that the aforeſaid *Change* is wrought, and that what was *Bread* before Conſecration is *truly Fleſh* after it; tho it appears otherwiſe to our *Senſes*:

I ANSWER; *What* the particular Compoſition of Particles of Matter referred to *is*, when conſidered abſtractedly from the *Impreſſion* it makes upon our *Senſes*, and the *Idea* it raiſes in our *Minds* thereby, we know nothing of, nor have any Idea concerning it; and therefore cannot have any Term to expreſs it by. And as its ſtriking our Senſes in a *particular manner*, and its raiſing in our Minds a *particular Idea*, is what alone brings it under the Denomination of *Bread*; ſo its ſtriking our Senſes in the *ſame manner*, and its raiſing in our Minds the *ſame Idea after* Conſecration as *before*, will ſhew or prove it to be ſtrictly, and properly, and truly *Bread* in

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both Caſes; and conſequently, that there is no ſuch Change as is pretended, becauſe *Experience* and *Fact* ſhew the contrary. Again,

SUPPOSING it ſhould be urged, That the following Propoſition is contained in the Scripture, *viz.* That *Man cannot do what is morally good without a ſupernatural Influence:* Then the Queſtion will be, whether this Propoſition be *conſiſtent* with, or *repugnant* to, the *Nature* or *Truth* of things?

IN anſwer to which I obſerve, That in my *Examination* of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, and in my former *Reply* to Mr. *Beaven*, I have ſhewn that Man *as Man*, or in his natural Capacity, is a *moral Agent*, and as ſuch has in him an inherent Power, and is at liberty not only to do what is *morally good*, but alſo all that good which comes within the reach of his Agency; and conſequently all that good which is his *Duty* to perform, and which is *neceſſary* to render him acceptable to his Maker.

THIS being the *Truth* of the Caſe, it follows that the above Propoſition is plainly *repugnant* to the *Nature* and *Truth* of things. It is repugnant to the Nature of things, it being an *Abſurdity*, and a *Contradiction* in Terms, to ſay that a moral Agent (which is the caſe of Man) cannot do what is morally good, without a ſupernatural Influence; becauſe moral Agency conſiſts in a *Power* and *Liberty* of doing all that moral Good and Evil, conſidered as ſuch, which comes within the reach of that Agency. It is likewiſe *repugnant* to the *Truth* of things, becauſe *Experience* and *Fact* ſhew the contrary; ſeeing all that moral Good and Evil which Man performs (in all common Caſes at leaſt) is performed by that Ability which ariſes from his *natural*

tural Compoſition: And from hence it will follow, not only that the above Propoſition is *falſe*, but alſo that *it is not*, nor *cannot* be, contained in Scripture; becauſe the Scripture, as it is the Rule of Truth, and the Word of God, cannot poſſibly contain in it a Falſhood. And,

THEREFORE if the *Quakers* ſhould make a large *Collection* of Texts of Scripture, and inſiſt that thoſe Texts, when *juſtly explained*, and *rightly underſtood*, do contain in them the above *Propoſition*; this would be exceedingly *vain* and *trifling*. For as the Point in Controverſy is not, whether that Propoſition be contained in Scripture, but only whether it be *true* or *falſe*; ſo if what they inſiſt on were granted, it would not ſerve their Purpoſe; becauſe a *thouſand* Texts of Scripture cannot poſſibly make a *falſe Propoſition true*; which is the preſent caſe. And all that would follow from hence would be, that the *Bible is not* the Rule of Truth, nor the Word of God, becauſe in ſuch a Caſe it would be *deſtitute* of *one* of thoſe Qualifications, which are abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary to render it capable of being ſo; than which, I think, nothing can be more *injurious* to it. But,

THIS is not to be admitted: For as the *Quakers*, by making their *Appeal* to the *Bible* in the preſent Controverſy, do ſuppoſe and allow it to be the Rule of Truth, and the Word of God; ſo, I think, this is virtually allowing that the *Bible* has *all* thoſe Qualifications which are abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary to render it capable of being ſuch a Rule. The unavoidable Conſequence of which is, that the above Propoſition *is not*, nor *cannot* poſſibly, be contained therein.

I SHALL purſue this Argument no farther; becauſe I think the Caſe is as plain, as that the Whole is equal to all its Parts, or as any other ſelf-evident Propoſition; and becauſe if what I have here offered is not ſufficient for the *Quakers* Conviction, then I think nothing can be offered which will be ſufficient for that purpoſe: For if Men will not be determined by thoſe *common Principles* which are the *Grounds* of Certainty, in all caſes where natural or moral Certainty is *attainable*, then they are not to be *argued* with, becauſe they *diſcard* thoſe Principles, which are the *Foundation* of Argument in all caſes. I come now,

THIRDLY and *Laſtly*, To make ſome ſhort Reflections upon the whole. And, *Firſt*, I obſerve what great Influence *Education*, *vulgar Opinion*, and the like, have upon the Minds of Men, and what *bars* they are to their *Conviction*, inſomuch that where the Judgment is biaſſed by theſe, there the moſt clear and convincing Evidence proves unſucceſsful. Thus the *Papiſts* go on one Generation after another to believe the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, tho in every Inſtance in which it is pretended that Bread is changed into Fleſh, they *ſee*, and *feel*, and *taſte* that it is ſtill Bread: And ſo they believe, in Oppoſition to the moſt clear and certain Evidence from *Experience* to the contrary. Thus likewiſe the *Calviniſt* perſiſts in the Belief of the Doctrine of *abſolute Election* and *Reprobation*, in Oppoſition to the moſt convincing Evidence of *Reaſon*: And thus the *Quakers* go on in believing that *the natural Man cannot do good, regarding ſpiritual things, without a ſupernatural Influence*, in Oppoſition to ſuch Evidence as is equal to mathematical

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Demonſtration, ariſing from *Reaſon* and *Experience*. Alſo,

IF it be asked, what ſhould be done for ſuch Men whoſe Judgments are *biaſſed* and *miſled* as aforeſaid? the Anſwer is, that ſuch Arguments and Reaſoning as are proper for their Conviction ought to be *propoſed* to them, that if haply they may ſome time or other examine things with *Freedom* and *Impartiality*, and be wrought upon thereby. But if they ſhould continue under the *Power* of their Prejudices, then it remains, that he that is a *Papiſt*, will be a *Papiſt ſtill*; he that is a *Calviniſt*, will be a *Calviniſt ſtill*; and he that is a *Quaker*, will be a *Quaker ſtill*. Again,

SECONDLY, I obſerve, that as the *Bible* is made a *common Parent* to manifold *Errors*, as in the Inſtances above; ſo Mens Underſtandings are put upon the *Rack* in order to *reconcile* the *Bible* to it ſelf, and to make it ſpeak in *one Place* what they preſume is ſpoken in *another*. Whereas if Men would but conſider, that as the *Bible* is allow'd to be the Rule of Truth, and the Word of God, ſo it muſt of neceſſity have *all* thoſe *Qualifications* which are abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary to render it capable of being ſuch a Rule, the Conſequence of which would be the *barring* of a variety of *Errors*: Then the Doctrines of *Tranſubſtantiation*, of *abſolute Election* and *Reprobation*, and of *Man's natural Inability to do what is morally good without a ſupernatural Influence*, would *ceaſe* to be in the Chriſtian World; becauſe it would be allowed that no ſuch Doctrines can poſſibly take place in the *Chriſtian Revelation*. Again,

THIRDLY and *Laſtly*, I obſerve, that as the *Bible* is very often uſed to *patronize* Mens *Errors*, ſo ſometimes the *Spirit* of *God* is made

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ſubſervient to the ſame Purpoſe. When Men are agitated by *warm* and heated Imaginations, then they are too apt to think of themſelves, and to perſuade others to think of them, that they are under a *divine Impulſe*, and that what they preach is the *Effect* and *Produce* of the Spirit of God in them. And thus Men of different Parties have father'd *different* and *contrary* Principles upon the ſame Spirit. And,

AS Men are *liable* to be thus *deluded*, ſo I think this is a *juſt Ground* to be exceeding cautious how we admit ſuch a Thought with reſpect to our ſelves, and how we ſubmit to what is put upon us by others as ſuch. Certainly this is a Caſe in which we ought to have the *juſteſt* and moſt *rational Satisfaction*, that we are not miſtaken; becauſe it not only affects our ſelves, but our *Creator* alſo. For if we *err* in this Particular, (as has certainly been the Caſe in a Multitude of Inſtances) then we make *God* the *Parent* of what ought not to be father'd upon him.

IT is not enough to ſay that the *Apoſtles* of *Chriſt* were under a divine Impulſe in their *preaching* the *Goſpel* to the World; for ſuppoſing that to be the Caſe, yet it will not follow that every Man is under the like Impulſe in his *Preaching* and *Miniſtring*, who pretends to be ſo. Beſides, St. *Paul* informs us, that he preached the Goſpel by the *Demonſtration* of the *Spirit* and of *Power*; that is, the Spirit and Power of God in working of *Miracles* attended his Miniſtry, to awaken the *Attention*, and to work the *Conviction* of his Hearers. But this is not the Caſe now; and therefore nothing can be *argued* from one Caſe to the other.

TO

TO conclude, give me leave to obſerve, that Man is endowed with a Faculty of *Underſtanding*, which was given him on purpoſe to *direct* and *guide* him in all his Affairs: And tho he is *liable* to fall into a great many *Errors*, and is capable of receiving Information from other Agents, in order to rectify thoſe Errors, and thereby to have his Mind furniſhed with ſuch Truths as otherwiſe he would or might be ignorant of; yet in theſe Caſes it is his *own* Underſtanding which is his *proper Guide*. And therefore if God ſhould at any time impreſs upon our Minds any *uſeful Truths*, this is only *applying to* and calling the human Underſtanding into *Exerciſe*. In which Caſe Man is not dealt with as a *Machine*, but as a *moral Agent*: God does not *over-rule* nor *ſuperſede* the Uſe of the Underſtanding, but only *applies* and *appeals* to it. And,

THEREFORE *divine Impreſſions* are not to be conſider'd as a *Principle* or *Agent*, which acts in every Man, but only as a *divine* Application made to the *Underſtandings* of Men, like as one Man by Speech, Writing, or otherwiſe, *applies* to the Underſtanding of another, tho in a different way; the human Underſtanding being naturally qualified to take in the *Ideas* it receives, and to form the *Judgment* it makes, antecedent to ſuch Application. So that the *Light* of *Nature* or *Reaſon*, and the *Light* of *Chriſt*, are not *two* diſtinct and different *Principles* of *Diſcernment* in Men, (the one dim, and the other clear, as ſome chuſe to expreſs it) the latter being only an *Addreſs* or *Application* to the former; the *Spirit* of *Chriſt* only *raiſing* or *making preſent* to Mens Minds ſome Ideas, which otherwiſe they might not have. For tho our Ideas of Things are either *recalled* or *raiſed* in our Minds by

by *Reflection*, by the wandring of the *Imagination*, by our *Senſes* being ſtruck by Objects from without, by *Divine Revelation* or *Divine Impreſſions*, by *converſing* with others, and the like; yet theſe are not ſo many diſtinct *Principles* of *Diſcernment* in Men, but only ſo many *different ways* in which the Underſtanding is called into Exerciſe, and by which we come at Truth. And,

THO God may ſometimes interpoſe and impreſs uſeful Truths upon the Minds of Men, yet ſeeing we have no *certain* and *infallible Rule* of judging when he does ſo; therefore, I think, we ought not in *any Inſtance* to determine that the Ideas which are preſent to the Mind, are the Produce of a *Divine Impulſe*. For if this be admitted in one *Inſtance*, then it may in another, and ſo on; which opens a Door to all *Enthuſiaſm*. And whoever pretends that they are in any particular Inſtances (whether in their preaching or otherwiſe) under a *Divine Impulſe*, if the Subject impreſſed upon the Mind be what *Mankind are intereſted in*, then I think ſuch Men ought in *Juſtice* to ſhew the *Grounds* upon which they form ſuch a Judgment, and to make it *plain* to the Underſtandings of Men, that this is the *Truth* of the Caſe.

IF they ſhould ſay, tho this is a Point which is moſt *evident* and *certain*, yet it is what is only to be *felt* or *experienced* in themſelves, and not to be explained to others.

I ANSWER; If a Man is *certain* that he is under a *Divine Impreſſion*, then ſurely it muſt be in his power to ſhew what is the *Ground* of that Certainty; whether it be the *Force* and *Strength* of the Impreſſion, or the *Pleaſure* and *Satisfaction* ariſing from it; or *whatever* it be, if he is convinced upon *rational Evidence*, then I

preſume our Language is not ſo barren, but he may find Words to convey his Ideas by. And,

WHEN Men talk of experiencing Grounds of Certainty in themſelves, which they cannot explain; this is drawing the Curtain, and taking ſanctuary in *Darkneſs*. By this they effectually prevent all others from examining the Point, and diſcovering the *Deluſion* (if that ſhould be the caſe;) and likewiſe by this they bar up the way of *Argument* and *Conviction* from themſelves. And whatever Certainty Men may pretend to in ſuch a caſe; yet, I think, there is *juſt Ground* for Suſpicion, that it is but bare *Preſumption*; and that it is very *doubtful*, whether their Conviction be any other than the Produce of Enthuſiaſm. I ſhall add no more at preſent, but that I am,

SIR,

Your Obliged

Humble Servant, &c.

Some SHORT

REFLECTIONS

ON

Virtue and *Happineſs*.

Wherein is ſhewn,

That GOOD and EVIL are founded in the Abſtract Nature and Reaſon of Things: That Selfiſhneſs and Benevolence are two diſtinct and independent Principles of Action: That Virtue is ſolely founded in Benevolence: And, That the Preſerving and Cheriſhing in our ſelves a benevolent Temper and Diſpoſition, is the moſt ſure Way to a Happy Life.

Some SHORT

REFLECTIONS

ON

Virtue and *Happineſs.*

THAT there are ſome Actions *Good* and others *Evil*, in the abſtract Nature and Reaſon of Things, is affirmed by ſome, and denied, or, at leaſt, doubted of by others. And the Ground of this Doubt ariſes from hence, *viz.* the *different* Opinions of Mankind in this Reſpect; what one eſteems Good, another eſteems Evil, *&c.* Whereas it is urged, that if Good and Evil were founded in *Nature*, then the Opinions and Conceptions of Mankind concerning them would be the ſame. And,

HERE, I think, it muſt be allowed, that if Good and Evil are founded in the abſtract Nature and Reaſon of Things, then there muſt be ſome *common Principle*, which is *ſelf-evident*, that

all Mankind are agreed in, which is the Ground and Foundation of all our Reaſonings on this Subject. But then, I think, it muſt likewiſe be allowed on the other ſide, that if by any *falſe Reaſoning* from that Principle, other Principles are introduced, and from hence ariſe different Principles with reſpect to Good and Evil amongſt Mankind; this in reality is no Objection againſt Good and Evil being founded in *Nature*, as aforeſaid.

THAT Pleaſure and Pain, or Happineſs and Miſery, are really *diſtinct* and *different* in Nature; that is, Happineſs is really delectable and agreeable, and Miſery is really afflictive and diſagreeable, is evident from *Experience* to all Mankind, and, I think, muſt be evident to all other *moral Agents*, who are capable of taking in the Ideas which are annexed to thoſe Words. So that this muſt be allowed to a *ſelf-evident Propoſition*, or a *common Principle*, which all Mankind are agreed in; and therefore whatever will follow in ſtrict Reaſoning as a *juſt Conſequence* from this Principle, I think ought to be allowed. As thus,

IF Happineſs be really delightful and agreeable, and if Miſery be really afflictive and diſagreeable, then it will unavoidably follow that Happineſs is *preferable* to Miſery; that Happineſs is the *proper Object* of our Deſires and Purſuits, and that Miſery is the *proper Object* of our Averſion and Shunning. Again,

IF Happineſs be the proper Object of our Choice, in oppoſition to the Abſence of Happineſs, or to Miſery, it will follow, that when two Kinds or Branches of Pleaſure, one greater than the other, become the Objects of our Choice, and cannot be enjoyed together; then

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in the Nature of the Thing the *greater* is preferable to the leſs. For tho the leſs be the proper Object of our Choice, conſidered as Pleaſure, yet it ceaſes to be ſo when it comes in competition with a Pleaſure that is greater, the Enjoyment of which is incompatible with it. For if it is right to *chuſe Pleaſure*, becauſe it is pleaſing and agreeable; then it is right to prefer the *greater* to the leſs, becauſe the greater is *more pleaſing* and agreeable. This I think will follow in ſtrict reaſoning, ſuppoſing no other Conſideration comes into the Caſe, to direct our Choice otherwiſe. Again,

IF Miſery be afflictive and diſagreeable, then when two of thoſe Evils are preſent, and one or other of them muſt of neceſſity be ſubmitted to, it is right and fit in the Nature of the Thing that we prefer the *leſs* to the greater. For if Miſery ought in reaſon to be *ſhunned*, becauſe it is afflictive and diſagreeable; then in reaſon we ought to ſhun the *greater* rather than the leſs, becauſe the greater is *more afflictive* and diſagreeable. Again,

IF Happineſs be in it ſelf really pleaſing and agreeable, and if Miſery be in it ſelf really afflictive and diſagreeable, then it will follow, that the Communication of Happineſs is *preferable* to the Communication of Miſery; that the Communication of *Happineſs* is, in the Nature of the Thing, *kind* and *good*; and, that the Communication of *Miſery* is, in the Nature of the Thing, *unkind* and *evil*. Again,

IF Happineſs be proper to be choſen for *ones ſelf*, becauſe it is pleaſing and agreeable; then it is fit and proper to be choſen for *others*, becauſe it is equally pleaſing and agreeable to them alſo. And if it is right and fit to ſhun

and avoid *Misery* for ones self, because it is afflictive and disagreeable; then it is right and fit to *guard* and *secure* others from it: And it is wrong and evil to *communicate Misery* to them, because Misery is equally afflictive and disagreeable to them also. I say, these Consequences evidently and unavoidably follow, supposing no other Consideration comes into the Case; the Reason being the same in both Cases; it being equally as reasonable that all others should be happy, as that we our selves should be so. Again,

IF Happiness be the proper Object of our Choice, and if it is equally as reasonable that *each Individual* should be happy, as that any other Individual should be so; then it is right and fit to prefer our *own Happiness* to that of any other Individual, when these come in Competition. For as we are *nearer* and *dearer* to our selves, than any other Individual; and as we have an *equal Title* to Happiness with any other Individual; so this in reason ought to determine our Choice in favour of *our selves*, when our own Happiness and that of any other Individual come in competition. Again,

IF the greater Good be in Nature and Reason preferable to the less, (which surely must be allowed) then the Consequences are unavoidable, *viz.* That the publick Happiness is *preferable* to the Happiness of any Individual; That a *more general Happiness* is preferable to a less general, *&c.*

THESE are Consequences, which I think will follow in strict Reasoning, from the one common and self-evident Principle before laid down. And therefore if Men in their farther Reasonings, with respect to the great Variety

of complex Caſes which the Subject affords, ſhould draw any *wrong Concluſions*, (which is eaſy to ſuppoſe may be done) and from hence ſhould ariſe *different Opinions* concerning the Good or Evil of Actions in particular Caſes; all that will follow from hence is, that Men are *liable* to *err* in this as well as in many other Caſes; but it will by no means invalidate the Evidence I have here produc'd to prove the following Propoſition, viz. *That Good and Evil are founded in the abſtract nature and reaſon of Things.* And,

IF there are any of our Species, who taſte Pleaſure in and by the *Pain* and *Miſery* which they *communicate* to their Fellow-Creatures, (which is hard to ſuppoſe, and as it is not the Caſe of our Species in general, ſo it is not the Reſult of the human Conſtitution, but muſt be the Effect of ſome Diſorder in the *particular Conſtitution* of each Individual) it will not follow in Reaſon, that they ought to communicate that Pain and Miſery, in order to taſte the Pleaſure which will ariſe to themſelves thereby; but the contrary. For as the Affection is *vicious*, as it is excited by an Object that is in it ſelf *evil*, and thereby naturally tends to introduce Evil and Miſery into the World; ſo for that Reaſon it ought not to be gratified and indulged, but to be *checked* and *reſtrained*. And if a Man ſhould be led by ſuch a vicious Affection to purſue Pleaſure, yet he could not in reaſon *juſtify* his Conduct herein, any more than he could, if by a *vitiated Palate* he taſted Pleaſure in eating or drinking ſuch things as were *deſtructive* of his *Health*; and yet would eat and drink thoſe things, to give himſelf the Pleaſure that aroſe from them, which in reaſon he ought not. For as his vitiated Appetite

petite naturally leads him to *hurt* and *injure himſelf*, and therefore ought in reaſon to be reſtrained; ſo his vitiated Affection naturally leads him to *hurt* and *injure others*; and therefore it ought in reaſon to be reſtrained alſo. *Nature* leads him to purſue Pleaſure in each Caſe; but then the *Circumſtances* which attend them render it fit and reaſonable, that he ſhould deny himſelf, and not gratify thoſe Inclinations.

AS to the Pleaſure which a Man takes in *ſhooting a Partridge*, and the like, theſe are Caſes which I think do not come into the preſent Queſtion; becauſe the *Pleaſure* of the one does not ſpring from the *Miſery* of the other, but from a variety of other Cauſes, *viz.* the *Exerciſe* a Man gives his Body by riding or walking, the entertaining his *Eye* with a variety of Objects that are preſented to his View, the exerciſing his *Dexterity* in ſhooting, the Proſpect of obtaining a *Prize*, which the Game is conſider'd to be, the Hope of gratifying his *Appetite*, or entertaining his *Friends* with what he makes himſelf the Maſter of, the diſcharging himſelf from other *Enjoyments* for a time, that he may taſte the greater Pleaſure upon his Return to them: Theſe, and the like, I preſume, are the *Springs* of *Action*, and the *Foundation* of that *Pleaſure* which a Man taſtes in ſuch Exerciſes; and not the *Pain* and *Miſery* of the Creature. So that the Queſtion here will be, not whether one Creature may *juſtifiably* take Pleaſure in communicating Pain and Miſery to another? that not being the preſent Caſe; but whether the taking away the Life of the Creature *in this way* (which of courſe will introduce Pain and Miſery to it, tho it be not intended) be in reaſon *juſtifiable?* And here the Good of the *Whole* comes into the Caſe; that is, whether

the taking away the Life of the Creature as aforeſaid, be for the good or hurt of the Creation in general, of which I think the *former* is the Caſe; but that is a Queſtion which is not to be diſcuſſed here. And,

AS Actions are Good or Evil, and as ſuch are the proper Objects of our *Approbation* or *Diſlike*, when conſider'd in the abſtract nature and reaſon of things; ſo thoſe Actions render the *Actor* the proper Object of Approbation or Diſlike to every other moral Agent. And as far as the *good* or *hurt* of others is concerned in them, they naturally and juſtly tend to awaken the Affections of *Benevolence* or *Reſentment*. And,

FROM hence ariſe the Equity and Reaſonableneſs of God's *rewarding virtuous* and *puniſhing vicious Men, viz.* becauſe the one freely communicates Happineſs, which in reaſon he ought to do; and ſo renders himſelf the *proper Object* of divine Kindneſs and Benevolence; and the other freely communicates, or contributes to the *cauſeleſs* Communication of Miſery, which in reaſon he ought not; and thereby renders himſelf the proper Object of divine *Reſentment* and *Correction*. And indeed if this were not the Caſe, then the divine Conduct in the Adminiſtration of Rewards and Puniſhments could not be *juſtified*; becauſe there would not be any thing in Nature which would render his Creatures the *proper Objects* of either.

IF it ſhould be urged, that the Equity and Reaſonableneſs of the divine Conduct in this Caſe, are not founded on the antecedent Good or Evil of Actions, when conſider'd abſtractedly as aforeſaid; but on the *abſolute Will of God*, who as he has been pleaſed to give a Law or Rule of Action to his Creatures, ſo it is *juſt* and *reaſonable* that

that he ſhould *ſupport* his *Authority* by rewarding thoſe who obey, and by puniſhing thoſe who tranſgreſs that Law, ſeeing he has made known his Pleaſure herein.

I ANSWER; what is urged implies a *Contradiction*: For if there be not an antecedent fitneſs or unfitneſs in Actions, then it is neither *juſt* nor *unjuſt*, neither *good* nor *evil*, neither *reaſonable* nor *unreaſonable*, for God to interpoſe and ſupport his Authority. Beſides, upon the preſent Suppoſition there is not any thing in Nature that can be the Ground and Foundation of a *divine Law*; that is, there is not any thing in Nature which affords a *Motive* or *Reaſon* to God, to give a Law to his Creatures; neither is there any thing in Nature which renders one Action *preferable* to another, to be the *Rule* of that Law. And,

IF God ſhould from mere *Sovereignty* and *arbitrary Pleaſure*, give a Revelation to his Creatures; then the moſt abſolute *Scepticiſm* or *Uncertainty* would follow upon it; becauſe all Grounds of *Confidence* in God are taken away upon this Principle. For if God acts arbitrarily in *one Inſtance*, he may in another, and ſo on. If he gives a Revelation without Reaſon, or rather if there be no ſuch thing in Nature as Reaſon and Fitneſs for him to direct his Actions by; then he may *deceive* and *impoſe* upon his Creatures in any or in all the Declarations he makes to them, for any thing we *know*, or for any *Grounds* we have, from which we may conclude the contrary: then *Truth* and *Falſhood* ſtand upon a Foot, with reſpect to God; and we are under an *abſolute uncertainty* which he will chuſe. And,

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ON the other ſide, if there is a *Rule* of *Action* ariſing from the *natural Relations* and the *eſſential Differences* in things; and if it is *right* and *fit* that God ſhould govern his Actions by that Rule, then I think it will follow, that it ought in reaſon to be a Rule of Action to every other *moral Agent*, becauſe what renders it right and fit to one, renders it equally ſo to all. And this leads me to obſerve,

THAT as natural Good or Happineſs is in reaſon preferable to natural Evil or Miſery; ſo the *free* Communication of the former is in it ſelf *beautiful*, *lovely*, and *praiſe-worthy*; and, as ſuch, is the proper Object of Choice or Election to every moral Agent, in oppoſition to Non-Action, or to the cauſeleſs Communication of the contrary. And conſequently it is to every moral Agent a *proper* and *ſufficient* Foundation for Action, when conſider'd abſtractedly from and independent of any other Conſideration. And,

THIS is plainly the Caſe with reſpect to *God*. For as *Selfiſhneſs* cannot poſſibly be a Spring or Principle of Action in him; ſo it is the natural and eſſential Beautifulneſs and Lovelineſs of communicating Happineſs, and the natural Unfitneſs and Diſagreeableneſs of the cauſeleſs Communication of the contrary, which are the *Grounds* and *Reaſons* of his Actions. It was from a Principle of *Benevolence* only, that our Creator exerted his Power and Wiſdom, in calling this World into Being; and it is from the *natural* and *eſſential Differences* in things, from which ariſes that *Law* of *Reaſon* by which God always directs his Actions. And,

AS Man is by his natural Frame and Compoſition a *moral Agent*; that is, capable of diſcerning the natural and eſſential Differences in things,

things, ſo from hence it will follow that he is *capable* of communicating Happineſs *freely*, and for its own ſake, or from a Senſe of the Beautifulneſs and Lovelineſs of it, when conſider'd abſtracted from and independent of any other Conſideration, and therefore *can do it if he will.* For tho Man is an *indigent* Creature, and that naturally leads him to purſue his own Happineſs; yet that is not in it ſelf incompatible, but conſiſtent, with a free and diſintereſted Regard for, and Purſuit of, the Happineſs and Well-being of the reſt of his Fellow-Creatures; becauſe he is not only qualified to purſue *both*, but alſo to diſcern the *Fitneſs* of that Purſuit.

HAPPINESS is the *great End* of Being to every ſenſible Creature; and therefore the particular Happineſs of each Individual muſt and will be the Object of Deſire to every ſuch Creature; and conſequently *Selfiſhneſs* is the Produce of, or is a Part of the *human Conſtitution.* But tho private Happineſs be the Object of Deſire to every Man, yet it is not the *ſole* and *only* Object of that Affection: For as Happineſs is *deſirable* for one's ſelf, ſo it is deſirable for others alſo. The agreeableneſs of Pleaſure to our ſelves, not only convinces us, that it muſt be alike agreeable to all others, but likewiſe diſpoſes us to *communicate* that Pleaſure to them. So that *Benevolence*, as well as *Selfiſhneſs*, is the Reſult of, or is a Part of our *natural Conſtitution*; and each of theſe are *diſtinct* and *independent* Principles of Action. A Man can purſue his own Happineſs without any regard to the Good of others, and he can purſue the Good of others without any View or Regard to himſelf. And,

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THO a Man cannot prefer Evil to Good, this being as much out of his Power, as it is to make the *Smell* of a *Roſe*, or the *Taſte* of a *Peach diſagreeable* to himſelf; yet he may and can prefer the Good of the *Publick* to his own, when they come in competition. For as Selfiſhneſs and Benevolence are two diſtinct and independent Principles of Action in Man; ſo either of theſe may be ſo far *indulged* or *depreſſed*, as to make the one *give Place* to the other. A Man can ſo far indulge his *ſelfiſh* and depreſs his *ſocial* Affections, as to purſue his own Good without any regard to the Good and Happineſs of others; and he can ſo far depreſs his *ſelfiſh* and indulge his *ſocial Affections*, as to purſue the Good of others in *oppoſition* to his own, when theſe come in Competition. And,

THO private and publick Happineſs are ſo inſeparably united, as that a Man cannot rightly purſue his own Good, but he will thereby give Pleaſure to others, nor can he rightly purſue the Happineſs of others, but he will give Pleaſure to himſelf; yet it will not follow that either *Selfiſhneſs* or *Benevolence* is the ſole and only Principle of Action in Man. For tho theſe mutually introduce and contribute to each other; yet as they are diſtinct and different in themſelves, ſo they are two diſtinct and independent Principles of Action. And if it ſhould be urged, that becauſe a Man cannot rightly purſue the Good of others without giving Pleaſure to himſelf, therefore *Selfiſhneſs* is the *ſole* and *only Principle* of Action in him; then it may with equal Reaſon be urged on the other ſide, that becauſe a Man cannot rightly purſue his own Happineſs but he will give Pleaſure to others thereby; therefore *Benevolence* is the *ſole* and *only Principle*

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of Action. But neither of these is the Case, as I have shewn above. And,

THO the Actions that flow from Benevolence will give *Pleasure* and *Satisfaction*; yet that Pleasure is only the Result of, and not the Ground and Reason of those Actions: Like as when a Man pursues Happiness for himself, he will give Pleasure to others; and yet that Pleasure and Delight which accrues to others hereby, is only the *Result* of, but is not the Ground and Reason of that Pursuit. Benevolence and Selfishness being both natural, or the Produce of the human Constitution, we are thereby naturally led to pursue Happiness as well for others as for our selves; only when these come in Competition, then the Pursuit of either is a Matter of Choice or Election to us. And,

THO with respect to natural Good, the *Motive* to those Actions, by which we propose to procure that Good to our selves, is *Self-love*, or a Desire of tasting Pleasure in and by those Actions, (as the Agreeableness of a *Peach* to our Taste is the Motive to those Actions, by which we propose to give our selves the *Pleasure* arising from that agreeable Sensation) yet the Case is otherwise with respect to *moral Good*, or those Actions which are the Produce of moral Fitness. In the one Case we act, presuming it will *prove agreeable* to us; and in the other, we act because it is so *antecedent* to the Action.

IF I see a Body *figured* and *coloured* like another Body, *viz.* a *Peach*, which when bruised in my Mouth had given me a very *agreeable Sensation*; I am thereby induced to bruise this Body in my Mouth likewise, in expectation of tasting the *like Pleasure* as from the former; tho in this

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my Expectation may poſſibly be diſappointed, becauſe ſome *Defect* either in the Fruit, or in my Palate may render it *diſagreeable* to me. So that in this Caſe, tho Pleaſure is the Motive to the Action, yet it is not the Agreeableneſs of the *Action it ſelf*, (it being Experience only which can determine whether it will be agreeable or not) but only the *Hope* and *Expectation* that it will prove ſo, which is the Ground and Reaſon of that Action.

WHEREAS with reſpect to moral Fitneſs, the Caſe is otherwiſe; we act becauſe it appears to us beautiful and agreeable, *antecedent* to the Action, and not upon a Preſumption or in Hope and Expectation that it will prove ſo. If I ſee my Neighbour in Diſtreſs, it inſtantly appears *beautiful* and *agreeable* to me to interpoſe for his Relief, ſuppoſing all Circumſtances concur to render it fit and proper, and that I am capable of ſo doing. And in this Caſe, it is not any Pleaſure or Agreeableneſs *ſubſequent to*, or that are the *Attendants* on, the Action, but it is the *antecedent Beauty* and *Fitneſs* of Relieving which is the Ground and Reaſon of that Action; and which will be beautiful and agreeable, whether I am prevailed upon by it to miniſter that Relief or not. And it is the antecedent Fitneſs which is the *Foundation* of that *Pleaſure* we taſte in and after the Performance of ſuch an Action, and not the Pleaſure which ariſes from the Performance of the Action, which is the *Ground* and Foundation of that *antecedent* Beauty and Agreeableneſs.

THIS will be farther evident if we obſerve, that with reſpect to *natural Good*, as in the eating of a Peach, no one is Sharer by the Action, in that *kind* of *Pleaſure* which the Action introdu-

ces, but the *Actor*: Whereas with reſpect to *moral Good*, or the communicating Happineſs to others, the *By-ſtanders*, who are no way concerned in the Action, are *Sharers with*, and taſte that very kind of Pleaſure *by* the *Action*, that the Actor doth in the Performance of that Action. If I ſee another Man perform a good Action, it gives me the ſame kind of Pleaſure, as if I had performed that Action my ſelf: Whereas if I ſee a Man eat a Peach, this Action does not raiſe in me that *agreeable Senſation*, which it does *in him* that eats it; which ſhews not only that there is no juſt arguing from one Caſe to the other, but alſo that the *Beauty* and *Agreeableneſs* which is inſeparable from thoſe Actions that are *morally good*, do not ariſe from nor depend upon the *Pleaſure* which accrues to the Actor in and by the Performance of thoſe Actions. And,

THO in many Inſtances we purſue the good of others, either in *whole* or in *part*, out of a View to our own *Intereſt*; yet ſurely this is far from being *always* the Caſe. And I imagine it is *ſeldom* that Men do good to others, purely in view of and for the ſake of that Pleaſure and Satisfaction, which will accrue to themſelves thereby. A Senſe of the good of others, and the Deſirableneſs of making them Sharers in the Pleaſures we enjoy, are *powerful* and *ſufficient Motives* to induce us to procure thoſe Pleaſures to them, and that too for their ſakes, and not for the ſake of any Pleaſure which we propoſe to taſte in ſo doing. And,

THE Neglect of this naturally introduces *Remorſe* and Uneaſineſs of Mind; the Ground of which is not the withholding Pleaſure from our ſelves, but the withholding our Hand from giving that Pleaſure, and doing that Good to o-

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thers which was in our Power to do. Whilſt the *four Lepers* were indulging themſelves in eating and drinking, and loading themſelves with Gold and Raiment, from Tent to Tent in the *Camp* of the *Syrians*, their Hearts ſmote them, and they ſaid one to another, *We do not well: This is a Day of good Tidings, and we hold our Peace*, 2 Kings 7. 8, 9. Now the Queſtion is, what was the *Ground* of Self-accuſation to thoſe Lepers? not ſurely the withholding Pleaſure from themſelves, but the withholding from the hungry *Citizens* of *Samaria* the Opportunity of ſharing with them in that *Plenty*, which the forſaken Camp of the *Syrians* afforded, and which it was then in their Power to put into their hands.

IF it ſhould be ſaid, that tho a Man can communicate Happineſs to others, when that Communication is not incompatible with any Enjoyment to himſelf; yet our Inclinations ſo *ſtrongly diſpoſe* us to purſue Happineſs for *our ſelves*, that except we have the Promiſe and Expectation of ſome greater Good, to be enjoyed hereafter, which will *make up* for the Loſs we ſuſtain here, we cannot be prevailed upon to part with our preſent Happineſs, and ſubmit to ſuffer for the ſake of Society, or upon any other Conſideration.

I ANSWER, As we are naturally inclined to purſue Happineſs for our ſelves, ſo that Inclination leads us to purſue our *preſent* Happineſs, or the Pleaſure which comes before us, and is *immediately* in view, in oppoſition to any future Happineſs which may be incompatible with it: But then thoſe natural Inclinations, how ſtrong ſoever they may be, are under the Government of, and are *controulable* by, our *Reaſon*: So that we can *deny* our ſelves a preſent Plea-

ſure, and can ſubmit to bear *preſent Miſery*, in hope and expectation of ſome greater good laid up for us in Futurity. And our Reaſon can likewiſe, if *exerted*, govern and controul thoſe *very Inclinations* from *another View*; ſo that we can deny our ſelves, and ſuffer as aforeſaid, when it is apparently ſubſervient to the *common Good*. Our natural Inclinations are *controuled* in both Caſes by our *Reaſon*, and our Reaſon can as well exert its Authority, and reſtrain thoſe Inclinations, in one Caſe, as in the other. And,

AS the Difference betwixt natural Good and Evil, betwixt publick and private Happineſs, and the natural Beauty and Deſirableneſs of communicating Pleaſure, and the like, are *eternally* and *unchangeably* the ſame, conſider'd abſtractedly from, and antecedent to, any *poſitive Law*, which might conſtitute them, or any *Promiſe* of future Good, which might influence in the Choice of them; yea, antecedent to the Conſideration of a *Deity*: So that Rule of Action, which naturally ariſes from them, and the Fitneſs and Reaſonableneſs of our governing our Actions by that Rule, are *perpetually* and *unchangeably* the ſame, when conſider'd abſtractedly from, and antecedent to, all the Conſiderations before mention'd.

WHETHER the fore-mention'd Rule of Action may in ſtrictneſs be called a *Law*, and whether the Fitneſs of governing our Actions by that Rule, may properly be called an *Obligation*, according to the uſe of thoſe words, Law and Obligation, in the *Engliſh Language*, I think is not worth enquiring into: but that there is ſuch a *perpetual* and *unchangeable Rule* ariſing from the Nature, the Relations, and the eſſential Differences in things, and that moral Agents ought

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in reaſon to *direct* and *govern* their Actions by that Rule, is as evident and clear to my Underſtanding, as that the whole is equal to all its Parts, or as any other ſelf-evident Propoſition. And,

THO Selfiſhneſs and Benevolence are both the Produce of, and are the natural Reſult of, the *human Conſtitution*; yet it is what ſprings from the *latter* only, which comes under the Denomination of *Goodneſs* and *Virtue*.

IF a Man purſues Happineſs for himſelf, and prefers his own Good to that of any other Individual; this, I think, is perfectly juſt and reaſonable, and is what approves it ſelf to the Underſtanding of every Man. But then there is nothing of *Virtue* or *Goodneſs* in it, as thoſe Terms are commonly applied amongſt Mankind; they being uſed to expreſs *communicative Goodneſs*, and not the good a Man does to himſelf. If a Man does good to himſelf, the Idea raiſed in our Minds hereby, is expreſſed by the Term *Selfiſhneſs*; he ſerved or miniſtred to himſelf. But if a Man does good to others, for that reaſon, becauſe he would do ſo, the Idea raiſed in our Minds by it, is expreſſed by the Term *Goodneſs*; he did good, that is, he ſerved or miniſtred to the good of others: the Terms Good and Virtuous in this Caſe being generally confined to thoſe Actions, which are the Produce of *Benevolence*. It is when we purſue the good of others, in *diſtinction* from, or in *oppoſition* to, the good of our ſelves, that our Actions come under the Denomination of good and virtuous Actions; and they are more or leſs ſo, as the Good and Happineſs of others is more or leſs the *Ground* and *Reaſon* of thoſe Actions. And as far as a view of our own good comes into the Caſe, ſo far the

Goodneſs and Virtuouſneſs of thoſe Actions is *leſſened* and *decreaſed*. And,

THE Reaſon of this is evident, *viz.* becauſe the Actions only which ſpring from Benevolence, render the Actor *amiable* and *rewardable* to a foreign Agent, who is diſintereſted in thoſe Actions. When a Man does *hurt* to himſelf thro' ſome wrong Conduct, tho this would render him worthy of *Blame*, and tho his Actions would be *diſapprovable*; yet here is nothing which excites the *Reſentment* of a *By-ſtander*, and which would render him *worthy* of *Correction*: Upon that Account he has done *no Evil* to others, and therefore he can *deſerve* no Evil from them. So likewiſe when a Man does good to himſelf, how *reaſonable* and *juſt* ſoever this may be, yet there is nothing *valuable* in it, which *merits Reward*, or which excites a *By-ſtander* to contribute to ſuch a Man's *Felicity*: For as he ſought *himſelf* only in that Action, ſo he *cannot* deſerve any thing from another upon the account of it. Whereas when a Man purſues the good of *another* for that other's ſake, then he renders himſelf truly *lovely* and *amiable* in the Eyes of others; and they are naturally and juſtly excited by it to contribute to ſuch a Man's Felicity, if Ability and Opportunity concur to render them capable of ſo doing. For as he *generouſly* ſought the Good of *others*, ſo he *juſtly merits* the Love and Service of others upon that Account. And,

THEREFORE if a Man purſues the Good of others, partly for their ſakes, and partly for his own; as far as his own Intereſt is the *Ground* and *Reaſon* of that Purſuit, ſo far, of Courſe, the Virtue and Rewardableneſs of it is *leſſened*. And if the Ground of that Purſuit be purely *Selfiſhneſs*, then there can be nothing

thing virtuous or rewardable in it; becauſe it is not Selfiſhneſs, but *Benevolence* only, which is the Ground and Foundation of Amiableneſs and Rewardableneſs in the preſent Caſe, as I have before ſhewn. From which it will follow, that if Selfiſhneſs were the *ſole* and *only* Principle of Action in Man, then *Virtue* and *Rewardableneſs* would be incompatible with human Nature. Again,

IF a Man purſues the Good of others, upon Condition and in view of ſome preſent or future Good *promiſed* to him; this I think would give him a *legal* and *juſt Title* to what is promiſed; but then here is nothing of *Vertue* or * *Reward* in the Caſe. This is all fair Traffick or Bargaining; here are Covenants made and executed, from which Virtue and Reward are excluded. For as in ſuch a Caſe Man is not virtuous but *ſelfiſh* in what he does, ſo he is not rewarded, but *paid a juſt Debt* in what he receives.

IF it ſhould be urged, that this *ſubverts* the Deſign of the Goſpel, which was to lead Men to the Practice of their Duty from the *Hope* and *Expectation* of a promiſed future Reward; for if acting in view of ſome Good promiſed be Selfiſhneſs (as moſt certainly it is) and if acting from a ſelfiſh Principle does not render Men the proper Objects of Reward (as is here ſuppoſed) then the Promiſes of the Goſpel tend only to *betray*

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* *Note*, That the Term *Reward* is here taken in a ſtrict Senſe, as expreſſing only what is given freely upon the account of Merit or Deſert, and not what is paid as a Debt upon the account of Promiſe, or otherwiſe.

Men into *Selfiſhneſs*, which will not qualify them for the Reward promiſed.

I ANSWER, *Firſt*, That the *Common Happineſs* is the grand Deſign of the preſent Syſtem of things, and the great End which God propoſed in calling this World into Being. And this End is abundantly *fruſtrated* by Mens *indulging* their ſelfiſh, and *depreſſing* their ſocial Affections; this being the *grand Cauſe* of all thoſe Evils and Miſeries, which Mankind introduce and bring upon each other. And therefore if God, out of regard to the *common Good*, has promiſed to thoſe who *purſue it*, the Happineſs of another World, tho that Purſuit be not the Produce of Benevolence, but only in obedience to his Command, and from an Expectation of what he has promiſed; then God will moſt certainly be as good as his word, by *paying every Debt* which he has thus contracted by Promiſe; and conſequently the Promiſes of the Goſpel ſerve not to betray Men into Selfiſhneſs, and ſo to unqualify them for the promiſed Reward, but to engage them to do out of regard to *themſelves* what would be *valuable* and *rewardable* in it ſelf, if done from a better and a more *generous Principle*. Again,

I ANSWER, *Secondly*, That the great Deſign of the Goſpel, and to which its Promiſes are *intended* to be *ſubſervient*, is to work in Men a *benevolent Temper* and Diſpoſition, in oppoſition to that *general Corruption*, or *vicious Selfiſhneſs*, which prevails amongſt Mankind, and which is the Ground and Foundation of all our *Woe*. The great Thing recommended in the Goſpel, is a *Spirit of Love*: And as Love worketh no Ill to its Neighbour, ſo it diſpoſes the Agent in which it reſides, to remove the Uneaſineſs,

and contribute to the Happineſs and Well-being of all. And it is to thoſe who are animated by *this Spirit*, to whom the Promiſes of the Goſpel are made; ſo that where the *benevolent Temper* is wanting, there is no Title to thoſe Promiſes.

St. *PAUL* was ſo ſenſible of this, that he declares for himſelf, *if he had beſtowed all his Goods to feed the Poor*, and *if he had given his Body to be burned, and had not Charity*, or a benevolent Temper, *it would have profited him nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. He carries the Suppoſition to the greateſt Height, and inſtances in Caſes, which if Actions alone (conſidered abſtractedly from the Diſpoſition of Mind they ſpring from) would be *valuable*, then theſe ſurely would be conſidered as ſuch. And yet theſe, when conſidered *abſtractedly* from a benevolent Temper as the Ground and Foundation of them, St. *Paul* conſiders as Emptineſs or Nothing.

BESIDES, the Promiſes of the Goſpel are *deſigned*, and are *ſubſervient* to another Purpoſe, *viz.* to render the Loſſes and Croſſes, the Pains and Afflictions, which good Men are liable to, and often meet with in this World, the more *eaſy* and *tolerable* to them. For tho *Patience* and *Reſignation* are the beſt and moſt alleviating Remedies, which can be applied under the aforeſaid Evils, and therefore, one would think, ſhould be always choſen for their own ſake, ſeeing the contrary to theſe does but add to the Burden of Affliction; yet ſad Experience ſhews, that this is not always the caſe. And therefore when a Man is directed by the *Promiſes* of the *Goſpel*, to look forward to a State, when all Pain and Anguiſh ſhall ceaſe, and all Tears ſhall be wiped away from his Eyes, and he ſhall be filled with unſpeakable Joy; this naturally tends to

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lead him to that *Patience* and *Reſignation*, which is his preſent only Refuge, and which poſſibly otherwiſe he might not obtain.

IF it ſhould be urged, that if *Virtue* is founded ſolely in *Benevolence*, then in many Inſtances it cannot be *ſupported*: As when a Man is called to *ſevere Trials* and Sufferings in the Cauſe of Virtue; then he has not wherewith to ſupport him under, and carry him thro', thoſe Trials, except he calls in the Hope and Expectation of a future Recompence. And if he does that, then as far as he acts from ſuch a View, ſo far the virtuouſneſs of his Actions and Sufferings is deſtroyed.

BEFORE I return an Anſwer to this Objection, it will be proper to conſider what it is to ſuffer in the *Cauſe* of *Virtue* and *Goodneſs*; namely, when that Suffering is apparently ſubſervient to the *publick Good*. So that when a Man ſuffers for his *propagating* or *maintaining* this or that Sett of *Opinions*, or this or that *ſpeculative Propoſition* (except the propagating or maintaining ſuch Opinions and Propoſitions apparently tend to the publick Good) this is not ſuffering in the Cauſe of Virtue. A Man in ſuch a caſe may ſuffer in the Cauſe of *Truth*, but not in the Cauſe of Virtue; *Truth* and *Virtue* being as diſtinct and different in Nature, as Colour and Sound. I ſhall not enter into the Queſtion, whether ſuffering for the Truth be not, in ſome Inſtances, *amiable* and *rewardable*? But what I obſerve is, that to ſuffer for the Truth, as ſuch, conſidered abſtractedly from the Good and Benefit which the World may receive by that Suffering, is not ſuffering in the Cauſe of Virtue. But when a Man ſuffers to promote or ſecure the *Good of others*, and with that View; then, I think, he

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may properly be ſaid to ſuffer in the Cauſe of Goodneſs, or for Virtue's ſake.

THIS being premiſed, I obſerve, that a *benevolent Temper*, which is the Produce of, or is a Part of the human Conſtitution, when not *depreſſed* by the prevailing Power of Selfiſhneſs, but *cheriſhed* and kept to its due Height, and when ſeconded by *Reaſon*, is a *proper Foundation* for virtuous Actions in the moſt trying Inſtances. True Benevolence, *&c.* will diſpoſe a Man to venture upon the Mouth of a Cannon, and look even *Death* in the Face, when that Adventure is apparently neceſſary to ſecure his Country from *Slavery* and *Miſery*. And tho Selfiſhneſs ſo far prevails, as that the Inſtances are but *few* in which Men *ſuffer greatly* in the Cauſe of Virtue, from a virtuous Principle; yet it will not follow, that Virtue has no ſolid Foundation in Nature, nor any thing by which it may be ſupported: But all that will follow is, that *eminent Virtue* is rarely to be met with in the World; which poſſibly may be too true. But then it is equally as true, that there are but *few* Men, comparatively, upon whom the Promiſes of *future Happineſs* has ſuch a prevailing Influence, as to diſpoſe them to forego all preſent Enjoyments, and to yield up themſelves to Suffering and Death, to ſecure to themſelves that future Happineſs. And,

AS it would be inconcluſive to argue, that ſeeing the Promiſe of future Happineſs does not *always* prevail upon Men to go thro' the ſevereſt Sufferings (when called to it) for its ſake; therefore the Promiſe of future Happineſs is not a proper or ſufficient Foundation for ſuch Sufferings; ſo it would be a-like inconcluſive to argue in the Caſe of Virtue, that ſeeing Benevolence, tho ſeconded by Reaſon, does not *always* prevail upon

upon Men to practiſe Virtue in the moſt trying Inſtances, that therefore a benevolent Temper, *&c.* is not a proper or ſufficient Foundation for the Practice of Virtue in ſuch Inſtances, the Argument being equally inconcluſive in both Caſes.

AS to that Queſtion, *viz.* Whether a Man can chuſe abſolute and extreme Miſery, for the ſake of Virtue? This not being the Caſe of thoſe who ſuffer in the Cauſe of Virtue, the Queſtion is needleſs. All ſuffering in the Cauſe of Virtue (as it is a matter of Choice or Election) will yield abundant *Satisfaction* to the Mind, tho that Satisfaction be not the Ground and Reaſon of thoſe Sufferings. And,

AS Virtue is founded ſolely in Benevolence, ſo it is the preſerving and cheriſhing in our ſelves a *benevolent Temper*, which is the *Foundation* of a *happy Life.* Happineſs is the great End of Being to every ſenſible Creature (as I have already obſerved;) 'tis for that only that Being is *deſirable*; barely to *be*, conſidered abſtractedly from Happineſs, is no better than Non-exiſtence. And to be miſerable, excluſive of any Degree of Happineſs mixed with that Miſery, is worſe than not to be, in proportion to that Degree of Miſery which Exiſtence introduces. A *happy Life* is what we all deſire and purſue. Who is there but would, who is there but does chuſe to paſs agreeably thro' Life? And yet this is what almoſt all our Species, more or leſs, complain of the want of. From whence then is it that we are not generally happy? Surely our Creator *intended* us for Happineſs, and has *provided* whatever is neceſſary to make us ſo; and therefore the *Ground* of this Complaint muſt be *in our ſelves.* This then muſt be worth our enquiring into, *viz.*

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what is the *Ground* of our Miſcarriages, and which is the moſt *ſure way* to a happy Life. And,

HERE, if we take a partial View of the Caſe, we may be led to think, that the indulging our ſelfiſh, and depreſſing our ſocial Affections, is the *ſhorteſt* and *ſureſt* way to Happineſs. For as in ſuch a caſe a Man purſues Happineſs only for himſelf, and this one Point is what all his Deſires, Contrivances and Endeavours are directed to obtain, without incumbring himſelf with any care or regard for the Happineſs of others; ſo from ſuch a View one may be led to think, that this is the moſt likely way to obtain it. But this is ſo far from being the Truth of the Caſe, that on the contrary it is the Cauſe of our *Miſcarriages*, and the *Ground* and *Foundation* of our Unhappineſs. Whereas, if we preſerve a *due Ballance* in the human Conſtitution, by keeping our ſelfiſh Affections under a proper *Reſtraint* by cheriſhing in our ſelves a *benevolent* Temper, and by making the *common Good* the common and grand Principle to direct our Actions by; this is the *high Road* to a happy Life. And,

THAT we may have a full View of the Caſe, it will be proper to obſerve, that a happy Life is a *Compoſition* of various kinds of Enjoyments, *viz.* ſenſual, intellectual, and moral. And theſe are ſo *intermixed* and *reſtrained*, as that one Kind or one Inſtance does not *deſtroy*, but *heighten* the Pleaſures, which ariſe from the other Kinds, or the other Inſtances of Enjoyment: So that no particular Enjoyment is to be taken into the Account, which introduces ſuch *Pain* and *Vexation* in the Purſuit, or leaves ſuch *Remorſe* and *Anguiſh* after the Enjoyment, as is equal to, or more than an Equivalent to the Pleaſure which

roſe from that Enjoyment. If I ſhould, in the drinking a Gallon of Liquor, taſte very agreeable Pleaſure for the ſpace of *three Hours*; and if this Enjoyment ſhould bring upon me *ſix Hours* of intenſe Pain and Remorſe, and Anguiſh of Mind for ſo many Days more; then the forementioned Enjoyment is ſo far from being a Part of a *happy Life*, that, on the contrary, it muſt be placed to the other ſide of the Account: becauſe that, and ſo much Pleaſure more, is to be ſubtracted from other Enjoyments, as is an *Equivalent* to the Overplus of Miſery, which that Enjoyment introduced, before the Account with reſpect to Happineſs and Miſery, will be upon a Ballance. Again,

ALL the Branches of Enjoyment, which break in upon, and are *Bars* to other Kinds or Inſtances of Enjoyment; ſo much Pleaſure muſt be ſubtracted from theſe, as is equal to that Overplus of Pleaſure which they are a Bar to. And if thoſe Enjoyments are not equal to that Overplus, ſo far as they are *deficient*, they are to be placed to the other ſide of the Account, and to be conſidered, not as Branches of Happineſs, but as *Obſtructions* to it. If a Man in heaping up a large Quantity of the Riches of this World, ſhould taſte ſome *low Degree of Pleaſure*, in reflecting upon his Acquiſitions and Poſſeſſions; yet if his preſent Purſuits are a Bar to other Enjoyments, that would give him Pleaſures, which for Kind and Degree are *much ſuperior* to thoſe he now taſtes; then thoſe Pleaſures are not to be conſidered as Parts of a *happy Life*, but as *Bars* to that Happineſs.

THESE things being premiſed, the proper Queſtion will be, conſidering the various *Kinds* and *Inſtances* of Pleaſure which a Man's

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Conſtitution and *Condition* in Life render him capable of enjoying, What Courſe he ſhould take, which might, upon the whole, give him the *greateſt Pleaſure*, and render Life the *greateſt Bleſſing* to him? And this, I ſay, will be done by preſerving a *due Ballance* in the human Conſtitution, by *cheriſhing* in our ſelves a benevolent Diſpoſition, by keeping our ſelfiſh Affections under a proper *Reſtraint*, and by ſubjecting our Conduct to the Government of *Reaſon*. The Iſſue of all which will be a *moderate Purſuit*, and a *temperate Enjoyment* of this World's good Things, under a ſtrict regard to the *Happineſs* and Well-being of the reſt of Mankind. And,

FOR the farther Illuſtration of this Point, I would obſerve, that a *vicious Selfiſhneſs* generally leads Men either to a *violent* and *extravagant Purſuit* of *Pleaſure* (that is, to purſue this or that Kind or Branch of Pleaſure at all Adventures, without regarding how a Man's own Good in the general is affected by it, or how it directly or in its Conſequences affects the Good of others and the Happineſs of Society) or elſe it leads Men to a *violent* and *extravagant Purſuit* of *Riches*, and ſo bars the Enjoyment of many Comforts with reſpect to themſelves, and prevents their being kind and beneficent to others. But neither of theſe is the way to a happy Life: That lies ſtrait before us in a Mean betwixt thoſe Extremes, *viz.* in a moderate Purſuit, and a temperate Enjoyment, of the Bleſſings of Life, purſuing our own Happineſs, under a ſtrict regard to the common Good.

AS to all violent and extravagant Purſuits of Pleaſure, theſe ſurely, when weighed in the Ballance, will be found wanting. Theſe are ſo far from conſtituting a happy Life, that, on the

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contrary, they are *Bars* to that Happineſs. For tho the *Drunkard*, the *Debauchee*, and the like, may taſte ſome very *agreeable* and *intenſe*, but momentary Pleaſures, in their Enjoyments, yet, alas! when theſe come in competition with the *intellectual* and *rational Delights*, which a Man bars himſelf the Enjoyment of, with the *Diſorder* ſooner or later brought upon his Conſtitution; the *Pain* and *Anguiſh* of Body, the *Uneaſineſs* and *Remorſe* of Mind, which is introduced thereby; the *Trouble* and *Vexation* he gives to others, and which, when reflected on, return back upon *himſelf*; I ſay, when every thing is taken into the Caſe, then, ſtrictly ſpeaking, ſuch a Man's Pleaſures cannot be ſaid to conſtitute a happy Life, but are Bars to that Happineſs. And,

HERE I would beg my Reader to look abroad, and take a general View of thoſe Perſons who violently and extravagantly purſue Pleaſure: ſee them *with* and *without* their Enjoyments; ſee what they go thro' in many Inſtances to *procure* them, how many *Diſappointments* they meet with in their Purſuit of them; how *ſhort-lived* their Enjoyments are, and how heavily the Time goes off in the *Intervals*, having no other Fountain from which they can draw forth Pleaſure and Delight to themſelves. See how many Enjoyments, valuable in themſelves, and various in their kinds, which they *exclude* themſelves from taking; how much Pain of Body, and Uneaſineſs of Mind, they ſooner or later draw upon themſelves; and how often they cut off their *Lives* in the midſt of their Days, or elſe bring upon themſelves ſuch Diſorders as render Life a *Weight* and *Burden* to them. This, I think, will upon a juſt Inquiry appear generally to be the Caſe, with reſpect to all violent and extravagant Purſuits of Pleaſure whatever.

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SOLOMON's Condition and Circumſtances in Life furniſhed him with *Materials* for delight, and gave him the *Opportunity* of Enjoyment; and he ſeemed reſolved, if poſſible, to take the *ſhorteſt* way to Happineſs. And accordingly he informs us, that he ſet himſelf to purſue Pleaſure various Ways, and in the moſt violent manner, that his ſuperior Circumſtances in Life rendered him capable of: But, upon Trial, he found that this was not the way to *ſolid* and *laſting* Happineſs. For tho by this means he enjoyed ſome very intenſe but momentary Pleaſures; yet the care and ſolicitude in procuring them, the Uneaſineſs mixed with them, and the Unhappineſs entailed upon them, were much more than an Equivalent to thoſe Pleaſures: So that, upon the whole, he pronounces all thoſe violent and extravagant Purſuits of Pleaſure as *Vanity* and *Vexation of Spirit.*

THE caſe is the ſame if Men go into the other Extreme, *viz.* into a *violent* and *extravagant Purſuit* of *Riches,* denying themſelves many of the Comforts of Life; and putting off Enjoyment to the next Generation. This is ſo far from introducing a happy Life, that on the contrary it bars up the way to it. For tho their preſent Acquiſitions and Poſſeſſions, with the faint Proſpect of the Uſe which Poſterity may make of them, may give a Man ſome *low, weak Pleaſure* and *Satisfaction*; yet they are not once to be named with thoſe more intenſe and numerous Pleaſures, both *ſenſual, intellectual* and *moral,* which his Conſtitution and Condition in Life render him capable of taſting, and which he denies himſelf the Enjoyment of. Beſides, an eager Purſuit of Riches is ſuch a *Diſeaſe* upon a Man, as introduces a great deal of *Care* and

Solicitude to procure them, a great deal of *Anxiety* and *Thought* how to ſecure and preſerve them, together with the *Danger* and *Fear* of loſing them, and the *Loſſes* and *Croſſes* which frequently attend them; all theſe prey upon a Man's Spirits, and eat out the *Comforts* of Life. And,

THO ſuch Men regard ſcarce any other Intereſt but their own, yet they are conſtantly *betraying* it; their very Purſuits and Poſſeſſions ſerving only as Fuel to feed that *Fire*, which conſumes the moſt *valuable Pleaſures* in Life. And hereby the moſt ſelfiſh are the greateſt *Enemies* to themſelves, by their fruſtrating and diſappointing themſelves of that *Happineſs* which they are naturally led to deſire and purſue, and which only renders Being valuable to them. So that Riches to ſuch Men are ſo far from being ſubſervient to a happy Life, that on the contrary they bar up the way to it.

WHEREAS if Men would avoid thoſe Extreams, and purſue Pleaſure in the way which *God* and *Nature* hath pointed out to them; that is, would *moderately purſue* and *temperately enjoy* the good things of this World, and would ſo *mix* and *reſtrain* their Enjoyments, as that one Kind or one Inſtance ſhould not break in upon but heighten the Pleaſures which ariſe from the other Kinds, or the other Inſtances of Enjoyment; this would naturally tend to preſerve in them a *healthy* Conſtitution, *ſoundneſs* of Mind, *calmneſs* in their Paſſions, *quickneſs* in their Affections, and a *Reliſh* for every kind of Pleaſure: and when they thus purſue their *own Happineſs* in conjunction with the Happineſs and Well-being of the *reſt* of their Fellow Creatures, making a ſuitable Proviſion for their *Offspring* and *Dependents*, miniſtring Aſſiſtance and Succour, according to

their

their Ability, to the *Needy* and *Diſtreſſed*, living *neighbourly* and *friendly* with all, and making the common Good the common and the *grand Principle* to direct their Actions by; this will be a conſtant *Spring* of Pleaſure to them, which will miniſter abundantly to their *Delight* and *Satisfaction*. And as it will give them the *Enjoyment* of many valuable Pleaſures, which otherwiſe they would not taſte; ſo it will prevent many *Evils* which otherwiſe they would be in danger of falling into. It will cut off a great deal of *anxious* and *needleſs Care*, of *burdenſom* and *afflictive Toil* and *Labour*, and remove the *Foundation* of thoſe Uneaſineſſes which many of our Species groan under the weight of. In ſhort, this is the way to ſolid and laſting Felicity, and the *high Road* to a happy Life.

MAN is made a *ſocial Creature*; and as he is deſigned (with all other living Creatures) for Happineſs, ſo he is deſigned to be happy *in* and *with Society*. And when he purſues his own Happineſs under a ſtrict regard to the common Good, then he is in the moſt proper and likely way to obtain it. Then as he is capable of and diſpoſed to taſte of what may give him Pleaſure; ſo in his Enjoyments he is the moſt free from *Reluctancy*, and from every thing elſe which might be an *Allay* to it. And as he prevents the *Pain* and *Diſorder* of Body, and the *Uneaſineſs* of Mind, which are the Attendants on a *ſelfiſh* and *violent* Purſuit of Pleaſure; ſo the Abſence of this or that Kind or Branch of Pleaſure cannot be the Ground of much *Uneaſineſs* to him; becauſe as he is not violently ſet upon any Enjoyment, ſo the Abſence of one Kind or Branch of Pleaſure can eaſily be ſupply'd by the Preſence of another. And as he is intereſted in the *common Felicity*, ſo

he is a Sharer in every one's Happineſs thereby, whenever he beholds the *Peace*, the *Plenty*, the *Proſperity*, which others abound in. Theſe afford *Joy* and *Delight* to him; and whilſt the ſelfiſh covetous Man is gnawing his Tongue for Pain, at the Proſperity of another, who plentifully enjoys what he would *monopolize* to himſelf, but would not make uſe of; the other is ſolacing himſelf in beholding the Pleaſure and Satisfaction in Life which his *Neighbours* are enjoying. And tho the Troubles and Afflictions which befal others will give an Occaſion of *Concern* to him, yet that is abundantly made up by the agreeable Pleaſure, which ariſes from his *miniſtring* Aſſiſtance, Comfort and Relief to them. And,

WHATEVER Difficulties, Afflictions, or Diſtreſſes he may fall into, he has this Satisfaction in himſelf that he has acted a *worthy* and a *manly* Part. And as he has carefully avoided every thing which might draw upon him the *juſt Enmity* of any, ſo he has taken the moſt ſure Courſe to ſecure to himſelf the *Affections* and *Friendſhip of all*. If he looks back upon his Life paſt, this affords no Remorſe or Uneaſineſs of Mind, but Pleaſure and Satisfaction. And if he looks forward upon Death, this gives him no Forebodings of a dreadful Judgment and Retribution, but good Hope of a *bleſſed Immortality*.

THUS I have given a ſhort Repreſentation of the true and only way to a *happy Life*, wiſhing that hereby I may prevail upon thoſe of my Readers, who are otherwiſe minded, to try the Experiment; and then I doubt not but it will turn to account. Surely if the Men of Pleaſure falſly ſo called, that is, thoſe who violently and extravagantly purſue this or that Kind or Branch of Pleaſure; if they would but give themſelves

leave

leave to conſider the Caſe, and much more if they would but make Trial, they would be convinced that the Courſe they are in, is not the way to *ſolid* and *laſting Happineſs*, and that the way which I here recommend (and which in truth is the way that *God* and *Nature* hath provided and pointed out to them) is the high Road to a *happy Life*.

I AM ſenſible of my Inability to do *Juſtice* to the Subject before me; and what I propoſe and hope for by this imperfect Eſſay, is to ſtir up ſome more able Hand to treat of it more clearly, and to repreſent it to a much better Advantage, than I am capable of doing; becauſe I think it is a Point of the utmoſt Concern to Mankind. For as every Individual purſues Happineſs for himſelf, ſo many loſe what they ſeek for, by purſuing it *only* and *wholly* for themſelves. To conclude,

I OBSERVE, that as the Love and Practice of Virtue is the moſt likely way to Happineſs in *this Life*, ſo it is the only ſure way to the Happineſs of *another*. It is by our thus anſwering the great End of our Creation *here*, that we effectually recommend our ſelves to the Love and Favour of God *hereafter*. For if we are thus faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, then God will commit to our Truſt the true Riches.

A

FEW THINGS

Humbly offered to the Conſideration both of

BELIEVERS *and* UNBELIEVERS

IN

Theſe happy days of Liberty of Enquiry.

A FEW THINGS

Humbly offer'd to

CONSIDERATION.

WE of this *Age* and *Nation* enjoy many Privileges and Advantages, which other Ages and Nations have been Strangers to: One of which is a *Liberty of Enquiry* into Matters of *Religion*. For tho Mens profeſſing their Opinions freely in ſome Points may be contrary to the *Laws* of this *Kingdom*, and tho there may be ſome among us who *wiſh* to ſee the Laws rigorouſly executed upon their Neighbours in this Reſpect; yet theſe are under a proper and a happy *Reſtraint*, by the juſt and wiſe Adminiſtration of the preſent Government.

Surely

SURELY nothing can be more *unjuſt* or *unreaſonable aſſuming*, than for any Man, or Body of Men, to take upon them to *direct* and *govern* the Underſtandings and Conſciences of others, in Matters of *Religion*, that is, in Matters relating to the *Favour* of *God*. For as Religion is purely *perſonal*, and every Man muſt be anſwerable for himſelf to *God*; ſo every Man muſt in Reaſon have a *Right* to judge for himſelf, in all Matters pertaining thereto; and, conſequently, it muſt be *juſt* and *reaſonable* in our Governors, to *indulge* their Subjects in the Enjoyment of that Right. And,

AS ſuch Indulgence is juſt and reaſonable in it ſelf, ſo it is moſt certainly *wiſe* and *politick*. For when the People of any Nation are *made* or *ſuffered* to afflict and perſecute one another, for religious Matters, (in which the good or hurt of the Community is not concerned) then the *Strength* and *Power* of that Nation is imployed to *weaken* and *deſtroy* it ſelf; as ſuch Diviſion, Enmity and Oppoſition, in any Nation, naturally tends to its Diſſolution. However, this is not our Caſe, *Perſecution* being an Evil which our Governors *have*, and, I truſt, *will*, carefully guard againſt it. But,

THO a Liberty of Inquiry is kindly indulged, yet we do not ſee all the *good Effects* which might be expected from it; and eſpecially with reſpect to the *grand Queſtion* betwixt the *Believers* and the *Unbelievers*; this being a time, in which one might hope to ſee that Queſtion fully and clearly diſcuſſed, every Objection and Difficulty fairly removed, and Truth ſettled upon the moſt ſolid and laſting Foundation, which I think as yet does not appear to be the Caſe, each Party being too apt to *wander* from the Subject,

and

and to endeavour the *expoſing* each other more than the Diſcovery of Truth.

THE Unbeliever, inſtead of fairly propoſing his own Objections, is too apt to fiſh after the *weak* and *abſurd* things, which have been at any time ſaid by *Believers*. And as this becomes a Ground of *Triumph* to him, ſo hereby he awakens the *Paſſions* of ſome, and gives Occaſion for *Laughter* and *Diverſion* to others. But ſurely the Chriſtian Religion is not anſwerable for all the *wild* and *extravagant* things, which any of its Profeſſors have put upon it; and therefore I think it *unfairly* urged by the Unbelievers, and to be an *Abuſe* of that Liberty, which they are kindly indulged in.

WHETHER *Prophecy*, *Miracles*, or ſuch other Topicks as are urged to prove the *Divinity* of the Chriſtian Revelation, do (when fairly and impartially examin'd and conſider'd) *prove* or make good that Propoſition, is the Queſtion betwixt the Believers and Unbelievers: And therefore if the Unbelievers would ſhew the *Weakneſs* of thoſe Grounds upon which that Propoſition is founded, they ought to confine themſelves to the Queſtion before them, and not introduce that into the Caſe, which is foreign to it. I grant, that the Unbelievers are under a very great Difficulty in the preſent Caſe; becauſe if they ſhould be *open* and *frank* in declaring their Opinions and Objections, they are not *ſure* they ſhall not fall under a *Proſecution*. But then tho this may be a proper Ground to act with *Caution*, in order to guard againſt any Evil which ſuch Freedom may expoſe them to; yet ſurely it cannot be any Ground for *triſling* in Argument, or to miniſter Occaſion for *Diverſion*, in

a Queſtion which ought to be treated of with the utmoſt Seriouſneſs.

BELIEVERS are likewiſe too apt to *wander* out of their way, and to fiſh after the *perſonal Faults* of the *Unbelievers*; and from hence they raiſe a Battery againſt *Infidelity*; and will have it that Unbelief with reſpect to the *Divinity* of the Chriſtian Revelation, is not the Reſult of a *free Enquiry*, but the Produce of *vicious Inclinations*; and that Men chuſe to be *Infidels*, in order to get rid of thoſe *Reſtraints* and *Reluctancies*, which otherwiſe they would be liable to. This, I think, is uſing the Unbelievers exceedingly *unkind* and *ill*; as if what was true of ſome, muſt be *juſtly chargeable* upon all; and as if a Man could not be an Unbeliever, (that is, in common Language, a *Deiſt*) but he muſt be deſtitute of all *Honour* and *Conſcience*, *Virtue* and *Religion*: Whereas *Deiſm* is not *ſubverſive* of theſe, but perfectly conſiſtent with them. And, if I am not miſinform'd, the thing is *falſe* in *Fact*; that is, there are many *Deiſts* who are Men of ſtrict Honour, Virtue and Religion. And,

AS Believers and Unbelievers are thus uſing each other *ill*; ſo hereby they alienate their *Affections* from each other, inflame one anothers *Paſſions*, ſtir up *Reſentment*, and bar up the way to that *Kindneſs*, *Friendſhip*, and *Brotherly Love* to each other, which are eſſential to, and are ſome of the moſt principal Parts of true Religion. And if any thing farther were in their Power, it is to be feared they would not ſtop here, but would go into all thoſe Inſtances of Cruelty and Perſecution, which others have practiſed. This is what ſome Men ſhew *too ſtrong* an Inclination to, tho, by the Bleſſing of a good Government, they

they are happily *reſtrained*. But this is not all: For,

WHILST the Believers and Unbelievers are thus *playing* upon each other, they miniſter Occaſion to Men of *gay Tempers* and *little Reflection*, to throw up the whole as an *Amuſement*, and to conſider it only as a proper Subject for *Laughter* and *Ridicule*: For when they ſee ſo much Wrangling about the *Grounds* of *Divine Revelation* (which they conſider as the *Grounds* of *Religion*, tho theſe are as diſtinct and different, as two things can be) and ſo little Certainty on either ſide (for any thing that appears to them) then they are too eaſily led to think, that Religion has no *ſolid Foundation*; that it only ſerves the Purpoſes of *crafty* and *deſigning* Men; and that it is right for them to give a *Looſe* to their Appetites and Deſires, and to gratify every vicious Inclination.

THIS, I fear, is too much the Truth of the Caſe; that whilſt Men are contending about the *Divinity* of the Chriſtian Revelation, *Religion it ſelf* is wearing out of the World; Men either *throw it up*, or elſe exert ſuch Zeal in its Favour as is *ſubverſive* of it. And therefore I think it cannot be amiſs, but rather ſuitable and proper, to remind Mankind, that whatever *Difficulty* or *Perplexity* may attend Revelation, (which may miniſter Occaſion for Diſpute) their *religious* Obligations are the ſame. For ſuppoſing the *Divinity* of a Revelation to be moſt *manifeſt* and *clear*, the Believers *moral Obligations* muſt be the ſame as if it manifeſtly appear'd to be *otherwiſe*; becauſe thoſe Obligations are *antecedent* to and *independent* of ſuch Revelation: And conſeqnently the Caſe muſt be the ſame with reſpect to the *Unbelievers* alſo. And as this is a Matter which

equally

equally concerns them both, ſo I beg leave to offer a few things to their Conſideration. I ſhall not enter into the Queſtion or Point in Controverſy betwixt them, but only make ſuch *Reflections* as are *equally juſt*, whether this or that Revelation be of a divine Original or not. And,

FIRST, I obſerve, that whatever *Uncertainty* may attend any Revelation, yet it makes no Alteration with reſpect to *true Religion*, that not being a precarious thing, founded on *arbitrary Pleaſure*, and thereby liable to perpetual Change and Alteration; but on the *moral fitneſs* of things; and therefore muſt be the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever. For,

AS *Duty* neceſſarily ſuppoſes an *intelligent Being*, who is naturally qualified to diſcern and judge of *good* and *evil*, or that moral Fitneſs and Unfitneſs which ariſes from the Nature and the Relations of things, and likewiſe a *Power* and *Liberty* of acting one way or the other; ſo the Duty which lies upon ſuch a Creature muſt neceſſarily conſiſt in acting agreeably to the *Nature* and the *Relations* of Things, as aforeſaid. And,

WHOEVER takes an impartial View of *human Nature*, will ſee that Man is a Creature excellently conſtituted to anſwer the Purpoſes of *ſocial Felicity*, and to promote and carry on a common Happineſs: All his Appetites and Paſſions (when rightly directed and kept within due Bounds, ſo as that one is not indulged to the depreſſing of another) *lead* to this *End*, by rendering Man upon the whole an *agreeable* and a *uſeful Creature*: His Underſtanding likewiſe qualifies him not only to direct and govern his Appetitei and Paſſions, but alſo ſhews him the *Fitneſs* of a common Good, and the intrinſick *Excellency* and *Valuableneſs* of purſuing it.

MAN

MAN being thus conſtituted, it will be eaſy to know what his Duty muſt certainly be; namely, to put on ſuch a *Temper* of *Mind*, and ſuch a *Behaviour*, as is ſuitable to, and becoming ſuch a Creature: Or, in other Words, it is,

FIRST, To live under a *grateful Senſe* of that *Goodneſs*, which God hath ſhewn in calling a Multitude of Creatures into Being, on purpoſe to communicate Happineſs to them; and in a wiſe and kind Proviſion of all things neceſſary to make them ſo. And,

SECONDLY, Man's Duty conſiſts in a *generous* and *ſteddy* Proſecution of that *grand Deſign*, viz. the *common Felicity*, by rendering himſelf an agreeable and a uſeful Creature, and thereby introducing as much *Happineſs* into the Creation as he is capable of doing; enjoying the Bleſſings of Life in ſuch a way as is *conſiſtent* with, and *conducive* to the common Tranquillity, and denying himſelf every Pleaſure which comes in *competition* with, or is *deſtructive* of the common Felicity. And,

AS Man is a Creature deſigned and conſtituted to taſte of, and propagate a common Happineſs; ſo when he anſwers that End, by *promoting* the Peace and Comfort, the Happineſs and Well-being of all around him, and *contributes* to the common Felicity as much as is in his Power; as he then becomes a valuable and a lovely Creature, ſo of courſe he will be accepted and approved of God. And,

ON the other ſide, if he *vitiouſly monopolizes* the Bleſſings and Comforts of Life to himſelf, and *covetouſly* purſues his own Pleaſures and Deſires, when they are *deſtructive* of the Happineſs of others, and ſtand in *Oppoſition* to the common Felicity: As, in this Caſe, he commences a

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diſagreeable and a hurtful Creature; ſo he will be diſpleaſing and vile in the Eyes of his Maker. And,

AS our Duty ariſes from what we are, ſo it muſt continue *perpetually* and *invariably* the ſame, whilſt we continue to be ſuch Creatures. Revelation cannot *add* to, nor *diminiſh* our Duty, becauſe it does not alter our Compoſition: And conſequently whatever Difficulty or Uncertainty may attend any Revelation, this ought not to be the Ground of *Libertiniſm*, or the Foundation of *Uneaſineſs* to us; ſeeing our Duty may eaſily be diſcovered without it, and ſeeing *true Religion* and our *Obligations* are the ſame, whether this or that Revelation be of a *divine* Original or not. Again,

SECONDLY, I obſerve, that tho Believers and Unbelievers *differ* in Opinion from each other, yet ſuch Difference in Sentiments does not *alter* their Compoſitions, nor conſtitute them *two* diſtinct Species of Beings; but, on the contrary, they ſtill continue to be *Men* notwithſtanding their differing in Opinion, as aforeſaid. And therefore it is highly juſt and reaſonable, and their bounden Duty, to act a Part towards each other, and towards all Men, as is *ſuitable* to, and *becoming* human Nature, and to preſerve and maintain their *manly Character*. Surely nothing can be more abſurd than to ſuppoſe, that we are to put off *Humanity*, in order to become *religious*. And yet it is too common for Perſons to commence Creatures of *Prey*, by biting and devouring one another, in order to exert their religious *Zeal*, and to ſhew that they are *religious* Men.

ALAS! we are caſt into an Age full of Complaints of all kinds; and thoſe which re-

late

late to Religion I imagine are not the fewest. And among theſe, ſome complain of the mighty Growth of *Scepticiſm* and *Infidelity*, and others of the Prevalency of *Bigotry*, *Superſtition* and *Enthuſiaſm*. Now whether theſe Complaints are *well* or *ill* grounded on either ſide, is what I ſhall not inquire into. All I ſhall obſerve is, that as Men are apt to exert a *bitter Zeal* in theſe caſes, ſo they are likewiſe apt to *value* that Zeal at too high a Rate, by conſidering it as that which will render them truly acceptable and well pleaſing to God: But ſurely this muſt be a Miſtake. For,

AS divine Revelation is given by God to Man, on purpoſe to lead them into the *Love* and *Practice* of Virtue and true Goodneſs, by laying down ſuch *Rules* of Action, as were their Duty, independent of, and antecedent to, that Revelation, by repreſenting to them the *Conſequences* of a good and bad Life with regard to divine Favour or Diſpleaſure, and by appointing a *Form* of *Worſhip*, to prevent Contention and Diſcord, and to preſerve Peace and Unity amongſt Mankind: So where that End is anſwered by the Love and Practice of *Virtue* and true *Goodneſs*, ſuch Men will be accepted and approved of *God*, whether divine Revelation be *introductive* to it or not. And where that End is not anſwered, but Men continue in the Love and Practice of *Vice* and *Wickedneſs*, ſuch Men will not be approved tho they believe divine Revelation ever ſo ſtrongly; *Faith* and *Infidelity* in the preſent caſe being no other than the *giving* or *withholding* our Aſſent to a Propoſition, *viz.* That this or that Revelation is of a Divine Original: Neither of theſe therefore can be any farther valuable, than as they are the proper Reſult of that Evidence, or

the want of it, upon which each of them is grounded.

FAITH, ſtrictly ſpeaking, does not *add* to our Duty; and Infidelity cannot *take* from it. And therefore to exert a bitter Zeal on either ſide, as it is *unreaſonable* in it ſelf, ſo it cannot be *acceptable* to our Maker. All, I think, which can fairly be done in the preſent Caſe, and which will become us as reaſonable Creatures, is to propoſe with *decency*, and in the *beſt light* it can be put, all that can be ſaid on either ſide of the Queſtion; to examine it with *Care* and *Freedom*; to ſhew in the Spirit of Meekneſs what appears to us *defective* in what has been thus offered, and then to leave each other to that Conviction, which ſuch *Evidence*, or the *want* or *ſeeming* want of it ſhall produce in each other's Mind; ſtill remembring that our Duty, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is not affected by it.

LET not then the Unbeliever *deſpiſe* the Believer, nor the Believer *judge* the Unbeliever: For, if neither of them anſwers their *manly Character*, neither of them will be approved; and if both of them act the Part of *good* and *virtuous* Men, God will receive them both. Rather let them *bear* with, and *forbear* one another in love. For as in all Queſtions which do not admit of abſolute Certainty, (and which, I think, is the preſent Caſe) it is great Odds but ſome will *err*; ſo ſuch Errors cannot, in the Nature of the Thing, be a proper Foundation for *Reſentment*. The different Abilities, Improvements and Opportunities of different Perſons, and the various ways in which Men are capable of being biaſſed, that is, of leaning to one ſide of a Queſtion rather than to the other; theſe lay a Foundation for Error. And, as in all Queſtions of this

kind, a Man ought to be *modeſt* in his Aſſumptions, ſeeing he is *liable* to miſtake; ſo for that Reaſon he ought to treat *decently* and *civilly* all that differ from him, as knowing that Error in *ſuch Caſes* is what all Men are liable to.

The Unbeliever too often looks down upon Believers with an eye of *Scorn* and *Contempt*, and deſpiſes them as Perſons who are under the Power of *Superſtition* and *Bigotry*, and who have captivated their Underſtandings to the Will of deſigning *Prieſts*. On the other ſide, the Believer magiſterially denounces the *Judgments* of Heaven upon the Unbelievers, and conſiders them as *Enemies* to God and all that is good, and as Men whom *Luſt* and *Sin* have blinded, that they cannot ſee the Truth. But why all this? Surely which ſide ſoever of the Queſtion is right, ſuch a Conduct muſt be *wrong*, and highly diſpleaſing to that *God*, who has a common Concern for the Good of us all.

WOULD it not be more *decent* and *candid* for the Unbeliever to think with himſelf, that tho he is not convined by the Evidence propoſed, yet others may? and that therefore it muſt be as *right* for them to *give* Aſſent, as it is for him to withhold it? and that as Mens Judgments are capable of being miſled by *Education*, *Authority*, *vulgar Opinion*, and the like, ſo they do not diſcern the *Deluſion* themſelves, and that others cannot be Judges for them; and therefore it becomes a Man to be rather *jealous* of himſelf in theſe Reſpects, than to charge them at all Adventures upon his Opponents? And,

WOULD it not be alike *candid* and *becoming* for the Believer to conſider, that Evidence does not appear alike *concluſive* to all Perſons? and therefore if he is ſo happily diſcerning as to ſee

the *Strength* and *Concluſiveneſs* of an Argument, when the other does not, that then the other ought to be the Object of his *Pity*, but not of his *Cenſure* or *Contempt?* and that tho Mens Judgments are as liable to be miſled by their *vicious Inclinations*, as by any other Cauſe; yet as this is what they are not qualified to *diſcover* with regard to other Men, ſo it muſt be exceeding *wrong* in them to charge that upon another, which they cannot be Judges of, and of which they ought rather to think the contrary?

I WOULD therefore requeſt both *Believers* and *Unbelievers* to conſider themſelves and each other as *Men*, and to treat one another accordingly. I likewiſe beg leave to remind them, that they are Creatures conſtituted and appointed to contribute to, and to promote *each others Happineſs*; and that it is not their different Apprehenſions in any Point, which can *leſſen* or *take off* this Obligation: And, as the only End of our Being is, that we and the reſt of our fellow Creatures might be *happy*, ſo it is a very *wrong* way to ſecure the Happineſs of *another Life*, by making our *ſelves* or *others* miſerable in *this*. He that contributes moſt to the common Felicity *here*, whether he be a Believer or an Unbeliever, bids faireſt for Happineſs *hereafter*. And he that does his utmoſt to obſtruct the *Tranquillity* of this World, is the moſt *unworthy* of, and the moſt *unlikely* to obtain the Happineſs of another.

BUT farther, I beg leave, *Thirdly*, to offer a word of *Caution* to both ſorts.

TO Believers my Requeſt is, That they would take heed leſt their *Faith* prove a *Snare* to them. Alas! how common is it for a *Jew* to value himſelf becauſe he is ſuch; and ſo of all

other religious Parties in the World. How eaſy is it for a Man who ſpends his *Time*, his *Strength*, his *Zeal* in a Cauſe, which he conſiders as the *Cauſe* of *God*, to think that theſe will render him acceptable to his Maker? Whereas if theſe are ſeparated from *true Goodneſs*, that is, from a true regard to the *preſent* as well as *future Happineſs* and well-being of the reſt of his fellow Creatures; then it is morally impoſſible that he ſhould be ſo, ſeeing there is nothing which can render us *valuable* in the ſight of God, but our acting a *worthy* and a *manly* Part. Our rendering our ſelves *agreeable Creatures*, by acting conformably to our Compoſition, is that and *that only* which will render us *acceptable* to the Author of it.

LET not then a *ſtrong Perſuaſion* of the Truth of divine Revelation, and a *zealous* contending for it, blind our Eyes, by leading us to think that theſe, or any thing ſhort of *perſonal Virtue*, will render us worthy of divine Regard: But let us endeavour to anſwer the great End of all *Divine Revelation*, which is to make us *good Creatures*, by acting a Part ſuitable to, and becoming our rational and manly Nature; and then we ſhall not fail of God's Favour. Again,

MY Requeſt to the Unbeliever is, That he would take heed leſt his *Infidelity* lead him to *Libertiniſm*. Alas! how eaſy is it for him to *ſplit* upon this *Rock!* For when he ſees that the generality of Men make Revelation the *only Ground* of Religion; and when he judges that the *Divinity* of that Revelation has no *ſolid Foundation*, he is then in danger of drawing this *falſe Concluſion* from thoſe Premiſes, namely, that he is under *no religious Obligation* at all; and conſequently that he is perfectly at *Liberty* to gratify every vicious Inclination.

I WOULD therefore beg leave to remind him, that however the Caſe may ſtand with regard to the *Divinity* of this or that Revelation, yet this makes no *Alteration* with regard to *true Religion*. He is a *Man*; and from hence his *religious* Obligations ariſe. He is a *moral Agent*, who is excellently conſtituted to promote and carry on a *common Happineſs*; and therefore it muſt and will be his *Duty*, to put on ſuch a Temper of Mind, and ſuch a Behaviour, as is *ſuitable* to and *becoming* ſuch a Creature. But farther,

LET me intreat both Believers and Unbelievers not to *play upon* and *ſport* themſelves with each other's *Weakneſs*, but rather in a decent and manly way endeavour the removing it, and if that cannot be done, to cover it with the *Mantle* of *Love*. It is true, *ridiculous* things are and will be the *Objects* of *Ridicule*: But then it ought to be remembred, that the proper End of Ridicule, is in a way of *Pleaſantry* to convince the Judgments of thoſe Men, who would not be ſo eaſily convinced in a way of *grave Argument*. For when they ſee that the *Fool's Coat* is the natural Dreſs of their *Opinions* or *Practices*; this gives them a *Jealouſy* that there is ſome Defect in the Arguments that convince them, which Jealouſy otherwiſe they would not have. I ſay, the proper End of *Ridicule* is to *convince* the *Judgment*, and thereby to remove the *ridiculous Object*; and not to awaken Reſentment, and inflame the Paſſions: and therefore every Man, who practiſes in this way, ought to take care, that if poſſible the *proper End* of Ridicule may be anſwer'd by it.

TO conclude this Head; give me leave to repeat what I have already ſo often obſerved, namely, that our *different* Apprehenſions in any

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Point cannot poſſibly *cancel* the Obligation we are under to *love* and *do good* to each other; much leſs will it *juſtify* or *excuſe* any inhuman Action. For as our religious Obligations ariſe from our being *Men*, ſo they muſt and will remain upon us whilſt we continue to be ſuch.

I WILL only add, that we are *Men*, and as ſuch, our Underſtandings are liable to be *miſled*: And if Error is a proper Foundation for *Reſentment* (which ſurely it is not) then let him that is *free* caſt the firſt Stone. Again,

FOURTHLY and *Laſtly*, I beg leave to remind the *Unbelievers*, that however the Caſe may ſtand with regard to the *Divinity* of this or that Revelation, yet the *ſolid Grounds* of a *future Judgment* and *Retribution* are the ſame; and therefore their *rational Hopes* and *Fears*, ariſing from the Expectation of ſuch a Judgment and Retribution, ought not to be *weakned* or *deſtroyed* by it.

MAN is an *intelligent free Creature*, who is naturally qualified to diſcern and judge of Good and Evil, and to direct his Actions accordingly: And conſequently he is capable of *promoting* or *hindering* the common Happineſs, by rendering himſelf an agreeable and uſeful, or a diſagreeable and hurtful Creature. Now if it is *right* and *fit* in the Nature of the thing, when ſuch a Creature has acted his Part in Life, and is gone off the Stage of Action, that *God* ſhould call him to an *Account* for his Conduct, and render to him the due Reward of his Deeds in another State (which ſurely will be granted) then a future Judgment and Retribution will *moſt certainly* take place, becauſe God will always moſt certainly do what is *right* and *fit* in the nature of things, and conſequently future Rewards and Puniſhments are as

evident and as *certain*, from the nature of the thing, to all thoſe who *ſee* the fitneſs of ſuch a Conduct, as any divine Revelation can declare or prove them to be. And,

THAT the *Fitneſs* of *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* is ſeen and allow'd by Men of all *Capacities*, *Nations* and *Religions*, is evident from hence, *viz.* That when any of theſe repoſe a *Truſt* in any other Perſon whom they have a Dominion over, they judge it right and fit to call the Truſtee to an *Account*, and likewiſe to ſhew their *Favour* or *Diſpleaſure* to him, according as he has *rightly* imploy'd or *abuſed* the Truſt lodged in his Hand, and as that Truſt has been of greater or leſſer importance to themſelves or others: Which I think is an evident *Proof* that *all Mankind* are capable of diſcerning, and muſt allow the Fitneſs of future Rewards and Puniſhments, ſeeing nothing is more eaſy and natural to be diſcerned, than that what Men are and have is a *Truſt* lodged with them by the Maker of all Things, to be imploy'd for the *common Good*; and conſequently that they are and will be *anſwerable* for that Truſt. And,

FOR the farther Illuſtration of this Point, I beg leave to take a ſhort View of the *preſent Syſtem* of things, and of the gracious *Deſign* of our Creator in calling them into Being; that hereby I may vindicate the divine Conduct in *rewarding* Men of Virtue and Honour with a plentiful Share of Happineſs in another State, and in his *barring* vicious Men the Enjoyment of that Happineſs, and plunging them into unſpeakable Miſery.

GOD is a Being abſolutely *wiſe* and *good*; and as he is the Author and Fountain of Being to all others, ſo his ſole End in creating all things was, that he might *introduce* and *promote* a *common*

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Happineſs. To have made a World without that View, might have ſhewn the Power, but not the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Creator. Whereas to make a World for the ſake of a common Happineſs, and to make a Proviſion of all things neceſſary and conducive to that Happineſs; this diſcovers the Perfection of *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*: And as it beſpeaks a large Extent of Knowledge and Power, ſo it ſhews them to be *rightly employed*, by making them ſubſervient to the *beſt* of Purpoſes. And,

THIS is plainly the Caſe of the *preſent Syſtem* of things, in which God has not only exerted his Knowledge and Power in ſuch a *manner* and to ſuch a *degree*, as exceed all *human Conception*; but he has likewiſe diſplay'd his Wiſdom and Goodneſs moſt *conſpicuouſly*, by diſpoſing the whole as *beſt* ſerves the Purpoſes of a common Felicity. The Good of the whole is the *grand Deſign*: And as every Individual capable of Happineſs is intended to be a *Sharer* in it, ſo each and every one are intended to be *Contributors* to it. Every Species of *Vegetables* and every Tribe of *Animals*, each in their Place, Order and Time, being deſigned either *actively* or *paſſively* to be ſubſervient to the *common Good*. And,

AS Man is made the chief or principal Inhabitant of this Globe, ſo he is qualified to have a *larger* Share of Felicity on it than any other Animal. For as he has in common with the Creatures below him thoſe Appetites and Paſſions, which diſpoſe them to all ſenſual Enjoyments; ſo he is better qualified for *procuring* thoſe Enjoyments, for guarding againſt the *Loſs* of them, for laying in a Proviſion for their *Continuance*, and for the *heightning* the Pleaſures which ariſe from them. And,

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AS Man is thus qualified to taſte the Pleaſures ariſing from Senſe; ſo there are other Pleaſures provided for him to enjoy, which the reſt of the Animal-World (as far as we can diſcern) have no Taſte or Reliſh of. He is qualify'd to drink plentifully of the Cup of *intellectual Delight* (if I may ſo call it) by taking a View of the material World with its Inhabitants, by contemplating upon the *Nature*, the *Relations*, the *Beauty* and *Order* of things, by looking forward and backward, and ſeeing a long Chain of *Cauſes* and *Effects*, by taking a View of his *own* Frame and Compoſition, and of the Frame and Compoſition of the reſt of the *animal* and *vegetable* World, with their *Dependence* upon, and the *Relation* they bear to each other: yea, he can extend his View beyond this Globe to the other Planets, and conſider them with regard to their *different Magnitudes*, *Motions*, *Denſities*, *Diſtances*, and the like. In ſhort, he can indulge himſelf abundantly in this kind of Pleaſure, by ranging to and fro thro' the immenſe Space (if I may ſo call it) of *natural Truth*, each Part of which affords Materials for Delight.

MAN is likewiſe qualified to ſee things in a *moral* View, and thereby to taſte Pleaſures which are of a more noble and exalted Nature, than thoſe above-mention'd. He is capable of viewing the preſent Syſtem of things, conſider'd as a *Scheme* laid out for *Happineſs*; in which not only the Knowledge and Power, but likewiſe the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God are amply diſplay'd. He can ſee, and delight himſelf in ſeeing, how each Species of Beings becomes *ſubſervient* to the common Good; how each Tribe of *Animals* is qualified for and diſpoſed to Pleaſure, and the Proviſion which is made for their Enjoyment of it.

it. And as Man is thus qualified for Delight, by taking a View of the kind Purpoſes of his Creator; ſo he can *contribute* to his own Happineſs, by *promoting* and carrying on the ſame Deſign. He can every Day *add* to and increaſe his own Delight, by every Day adding to and increaſing the *Felicity* and Happineſs of others. Add to this the Pleaſures which ariſe from *Relation*, *Friendſhip*, and the like. From all which, I think it abundantly appears, that Man is qualified for a more plentiful Share of Happineſs than any other Animal. And,

AS Man is thus *intereſted* in the common Felicity, ſo he is qualified to contribute *largely* to it, by conducting his *own* Actions, and directing and governing the *Creatures* below him in ſuch a manner, as will be moſt *ſubſervient* to the common Good. He can *indulge* or *controul* his Appetites and Paſſions, as his own Happineſs and the Happineſs of his Fellow-Creatures *ariſe from* and *depend* upon it. He can employ the *Members* of his Body and the *Faculties* of his Soul, in miniſtring Aſſiſtance, Succour, Comfort and Delight, to the reſt of his Fellow-Creatures. He can provide for, direct, govern, and uſe the Animals below him in ſuch a way, as will be moſt for *their's* and for the *Happineſs of Mankind*. In ſhort, Man is capable of rendring himſelf an agreeable and a uſeful Creature, and of contributing *largely* to the common Tranquillity. And,

AS Man is thus qualified to promote a common Happineſs, ſo he is likewiſe qualified to *ſee* the moral Fitneſs of ſuch a Conduct. Man is endowed with a Faculty of *Underſtanding*, which qualifies him to ſee things in a *moral* View, as I obſerv'd above: And as Happineſs is the *Deſire* of every living thing, ſo every Man muſt ſee that every

every Creature has equally a *Title* to it, whilſt its Happineſs is *conſiſtent* with the publick Good. And as there is a Proviſion made for the Happineſs of the *Whole*, ſo in the Nature of the thing it muſt be *intended* for the whole. And as every Individual is only a *Part* of that Whole, ſo his *Intereſt* in, and his *Title* to Happineſs, can only be ſuch as is *common* to the reſt of his fellow Creatures. And as Man is qualified to have a *large* Share of the common Felicity, ſo it is highly reaſonable that he ſhould *contribute* as *largely* to it; yea, as Happineſs is a *natural Good*, ſo it muſt be right and fit in the Nature of the thing to *communicate* it according to our Power, tho we have no other Intereſt in it but the *Pleaſure* which ariſes from that Communication. And as the Happineſs of the *Whole* is in the Nature of the thing preferable to the Happineſs of an *Individual*; ſo the latter ought in reaſon to give *place* to the former: And conſequently it is right and fit that every Individual (who is qualified to *ſee* that Fitneſs) ſhould *deny* himſelf when his own and the common Happineſs come in *Competition*. And,

AS Virtue conſiſts in communicating Happineſs to the *ſuitable Subjects* of it; ſo it is the Height and Perfection of *Virtue* and *Goodneſs*, to deny our ſelves for the ſake of the Publick. And as every Man cannot but ſee (if he will reflect upon it) that the publick Good is the *principal* Object of his Care, and that he ought ſteadily to purſue it, and make his own *private Intereſt* ſubmit to it; ſo it is the Height of *Generoſity*; and therefore will render him truly *valuable* and moſt *acceptable* to his Maker. And as this is the Caſe of every *virtuous* Perſon, in a greater or a leſſer Degree; ſo it moſt certainly becomes the *Wiſ-*

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dom and *Goodneſs* of God, to ſhew his *Reſpect* for, and manifeſt his *Love* to, ſuch Perſons, by amply rewarding their *Merits* with a plentiful Share of *Happineſs* in another World, and by filling them with Delights, which infinitely ſurpaſs all preſent Enjoyments. For,

AS in the preſent State of things there is no *Diſcrimination* of Perſons, no Manifeſtation of Divine *Love* or *Hatred*, from any thing that comes before us; but one Event happens to all, whether *virtuous* or *vicious*; all move on according to the general Frame and Conſtitution of things, being under the Direction of thoſe *Laws* by which the natural World is governed; ſo ſurely it muſt be worthy of, and ſuitable to the Character of *perfect Goodneſs*, for God to take a time *hereafter* to manifeſt his Love and Reſpect to thoſe Perſons, who by their *benevolent* and *virtuous* Behaviour have rendered themſelves the ſuitable and proper Objects of it.

THOSE who have thus *freely* and *generouſly* contributed to the Good and Benefit of the reſt of their fellow Creatures, and have occaſion'd as much *Happineſs* in the World as their Condition and Circumſtances in Life rendered them capable of, and thereby juſtly *merited* the Love and Benevolence of all, are ſurely worthy of the *Divine Favour*, and of that Recompence of Reward, which perfect Goodneſs and abſolute Power are *enabled* and *diſpoſed* to beſtow upon them. Theſe are they who ſpeak their Creator's *Praiſe*, by anſwering the *kind* Purpoſe of their Creation. And therefore it highly becomes the great Governour of the Univerſe to do them *Honour*, by giving them a Kingdom which cannot be moved, and a Crown of Glory and Happineſs which fadeth not away. And,

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AS Man is thus qualified to become a virtuous and a lovely Creature, and thereby to *enlarge* his own *Felicity*; ſo he is capable of the *contrary*. He cannot only neglect, but be *injurious* to the common Happineſs. He can *oppoſe*, and as far as his Power extends, can *fruſtrate* the kind Purpoſe of his Creator, and can ſet himſelf as a *Bar* to the common Tranquillity: He can *injure* and *oppreſs* thoſe of his fellow Creatures, whom he ought to *protect* and *defend*: He can *afflict* and *grieve* thoſe whom he ought to *cheriſh* and *comfort*, and can make thoſe Hearts *ſad* to whom he ought to miniſter *Joy* and *Delight*: He can *deſtroy* and *lay waſte* when he ought to *build* and *plant*; and can *cut* off thoſe Lives which he ought to *preſerve*. In ſhort, he can become a *diſagreeable* and a *hurtful* Creature, and can render himſelf a *common Enemy* to the common Happineſs of Mankind. And,

WHEN this is the Caſe, which is ſo in a greater or leſſer Degree with every *vicious* Perſon, then they become the proper Objects of *Divine Reſentment*, and of the heavy Diſpleaſure of *Almighty God*. For as God cannot but *love* and *approve*, and will *reward* all Perſons of Virtue and Goodneſs; ſo he cannot but *hate* and *diſlike*, and will *ſeverely puniſh* all ſuch vicious Perſons, as aforeſaid. For when Men not only deprive their fellow Creatures of that Happineſs in this Life, which they are qualified for, and have a Title to enjoy, but alſo *unjuſtly* load them with *Unhappineſs* and *Miſery*; then it becomes that wiſe and good Being, in whoſe Hands they are, to *deprive* them of the Felicity of another World, and to plunge them into *unſpeakable Miſery*.

I SHALL not enter into thoſe Queſtions, *viz.* Of what *Kind* or *Degree*, or of what *Duration* that Puniſhment will be, which is to be inflicted upon vicious Perſons in another World: Theſe muſt be left to the *Wiſdom* of a Divine Hand to adjuſt. But this, I ſay, that thoſe who have been ſo exceedingly *unkind* and *cruel*, as *unjuſtly* to bar others of that Pleaſure and Delight, which they were qualified for and intitled to enjoy, and have been ſo *vile* and *barbarous* as to load others unjuſtly with *Unhappineſs* and *Miſery*, and thereby have fruſtrated the *gracious Purpoſe* of their kind Creator towards his Creatures; ſuch Perſons are in the Nature of the thing the proper Objects of *Divine Diſpleaſure*: And it becomes the *Wiſdom* and *Juſtice* of Almighty God, to ſhew his Reſentment at ſuch a Conduct, by barring thoſe Perſons the Happineſs of another World, and by plunging them into unſpeakable Miſery.

HAPPINESS is the Deſire of every *ſenſible Creature*; and therefore it muſt be *cruel* cauſleſly to bar that to a Creature, which is the natural Deſire of every living thing: And to *abound* in this, is to be highly criminal, and worthy of a ſevere Correction. And as all vicious Perſons have been envious at, or have indulged in themſelves a Diſpoſition to cut off the Happineſs of others, ſo it is *juſt* and *reaſonable* that they ſhould be made to feel, in a ſenſible manner, what the want of Happineſs is. Again,

MISERY is the *natural Averſion* of all the ſenſible World; and therefore *cauſeleſly* to make miſerable, and to abound in it, is to *deſerve* to be made miſerable in a very high degree. And as vicious Perſons have barbarouſly and wicked-

wickedly loaded others with Unhappineſs and Miſery; ſo it is *juſt* and *reaſonable* that they ſhould feel the weight of that Hand, which is able to make them miſerable beyond Expreſſion. And,

TO ſuppoſe in the preſent Caſe, that it is contrary to *Goodneſs* to make ſuch vicious Perſons miſerable, is very abſurd. Goodneſs *naturally diſpoſes* the Agent, in which it reſides, to *communicate* Happineſs to others according to his Power: And it as *naturally riſes up againſt*, and diſpoſes that Agent to ſhew his Reſentment at, the *cauſeleſs* Communication of the contrary. To communicate Miſery cauſeleſly, is oppoſite to *Goodneſs*; and therefore ſuch a Conduct is a proper *Ground* of Reſentment to a good Being, and will in the Nature of the thing raiſe in him a *juſt Indignation* againſt thoſe that practiſe it. And the quicker and ſtronger the *Senſe* of Goodneſs is upon a Perſon's Mind, the quicker and ſtronger will that *Reſentment* be which ſprings from it, in proportion to the Vileneſs of the Action. And as God poſſeſſes the *Height* and *Perfection* of Goodneſs, ſo he has the *quickeſt Senſe* of the contrary; which will be ſhewn in that juſt Diſpleaſure he will execute upon all vicious unrepenting Sinners in another World.

IF it ſhould be urged, that ſuch a *wiſe* and *good* Being as God is, will not puniſh Men ſo *ſeverely* in another World for their enjoying a few *ſhort-lived* Pleaſures here:

I ANSWER: God will not puniſh Men at all in another World for their enjoying a few ſhort-lived Pleaſures here. Pleaſure is what our *Nature* leads us to, and what our Creator intended us for; and whilſt we are purſuing it in ſuch a way as in *Reaſon* we ought, we are ſo far from incurring

incurring Divine Diſpleaſure, that, on the contrary, we hereby render our ſelves the ſuitable and proper Objects of *Divine Approbation*.

TO deſire and purſue Pleaſure, conſidered as Pleaſure, in ſuch a way as is *honourable* in it ſelf, and where no ill *Conſequence* attends the Enjoyment, I think cannot be criminal; and conſequently God will not puniſh Men in another *World* for their enjoying a few *ſhort-lived* Pleaſures here: But it is for their *vicious* and *unreaſonable* Purſuits of Pleaſure, in ſuch a way as is *diſhonourable* in it ſelf, and *inconſiſtent* with, and *deſtructive* of, the Happineſs of their fellow Creatures.

TO conclude: Let not then the *vicious* Man fly for Sanctuary to *Infidelity*, to render his vicious Courſe of Life *eaſy* to himſelf, endeavouring hereby to remove the tormenting Fears of a *future Judgment* and *Retribution*; becauſe *Infidelity* cannot miniſter any juſt Ground of *Comfort* to him, the caſe being the ſame in that reſpect, whether this or that Revelation be of a Divine Original or not. The *Certainty* of God's calling Men to an Account, and rendering to them a due Reward of their Deeds in another State, does not ſo much depend upon *Revelation*, as upon the *Juſtice* and *Equity*, the *Reaſonableneſs* and *Fitneſs* of the thing; and therefore muſt always be the ſame, whether God interpoſes and makes a Declaration concerning it or not.

THIS therefore is what I would recommend to, and leave upon my Reader's Mind, *viz.* That he is under *natural Obligations* both to *God* and *Man*, from that *Relation* he ſtands in to his Creator, and to his fellow Creatures; and that in *Reaſon* he is *anſwerable* to God for the Diſcharge of them; and that it is his true *Intereſt* ſteddily

to promote the great End of his Creation, viz. the common Good, by rendering himself as agreeable, and useful, and lovely Creature. For as this will render him the proper Object of *Divine* Regard, so it is the *sure way* to the Happiness of *this Life* and of *another*. And when he has thus acted his Part in Life, and is gone off the Stage of Action, God will, in his due time, pronounce upon him that comfortable Sentence of, *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 1. last word, for *Mant* read *Man*. Pag. 27. Line 13. for *Question* read *Proposition*. Pag. 31. line 21. add *Thirdly*. Pag. 54. line 19. for *to a self-evident* read *to be a self-evident*.